

## Mother and Child Health Care-An Ayurvedic Perspective

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**ABSTRACT:** Childhood is considered as the most quality of health, wellbeing, learning, and behavior across the lifespan. Child health care is one of the burning pages that has kept bothering and drawing the attention of the parents, doctors, health workers etc. India is a lower-middle-income country with the second largest population in the world. Despite this economic success, it has a high child mortality rate, and one in five deaths in children under the age of 5 years worldwide occurs in India. Poverty, malnutrition and poor sanitation are major problems for many Indians and are a major contributor to child mortality. So, the parents should know the basics of keeping children healthy, like offering them healthy foods, making sure they get enough sleep and exercise and ensuring their safety. According to Ayurveda the branch which deals with child health care is kaumarabhritya that deals with feeding and nutrition of children, care, and cure of the one who feeds the baby, correction of feeding problems, and the disease occurring in them<sup>1</sup> So, this article is an effort to throw light on the Child health care it includes all care, measures, and preparations well before the child is born and concept continues throughout the developing ages of child.

**KEYWORDS:** Garbhini paricharya Raksha Karma, Jathakarma

### I. INTRODUCTION

Children are vital to the nation's present and its future. The health problems of children are different from those of adults. It was also recognized that a child's response to illness, medications, and the environment depends upon the age of the child. Child's health includes physical, mental and social well-being. Garbhini paricharya is an important aspect of antenatal care in ayurvedic obstetrics as it facilitates easy delivery and healthy postpartum period<sup>2</sup>. The care of the pregnant woman reflects on the quality and health of the offspring. As per recent W.H.O report, it suggests that everyday approximately 830 die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and child

birth<sup>3</sup> Each stage of foetal growth is dependent and affected by the adequate supply of maternal nutrients. Malnutrition, due to macro and micronutrient imbalances before and during pregnancy, can affect both the mother and the foetus negatively. When they conceive, the nutritional well-being of women influences not only the growth of the foetus, but also the genetic organisation of the child's potential metabolic responsiveness and, later, of the adult. This field of epigenetics has become one of biological science's fastest growing and most complex fields.

### PRECOCEPTIONAL CARE

Preconception care can be defined as providing women and couples before conception with biomedical, behavioural, and social health interventions. It seeks to improve the welfare of mother, father and children in both the short and long term.

### Vivahayogya Ayu (Criteria for Marriage)

Acharya Sushruta noted that the treatment of marriageable preconception can be described as providing biomedical, behavioural, and social health interventions to women and couples before conception. In both the short and long term, it aims to strengthen the health of mothers, fathers and children. The age for men and women is 25 and 12 years,<sup>4</sup> respectively, while Acharya Vagbhata says 21 and 12 years, respectively.<sup>5</sup> The qualities of a girl for marriage are also stated by, that is, she should not belong to the same Gotra, i.e. Atulyagotra (same family), not having any infectious diseases, pretty, humble, having complete parts of the body, delicate, etc.<sup>6</sup> The Latest updates also suggest that consanguineous relationships have recessive characteristics.

### PRECAUTIONARY TREATMENT AS PER AYURVEDA DURING PRE-CONCEPTION.

The couple should first undergo Shodhana (purification) therapy, starting with Purvakarma (preparatory measures), Snehana (oleation), Swedana, then Vamana, Virechana (purgation),

Asthapana (decoction enema), and Anuvasana basti (oil enema). Both the partners should observe Brahmacharya for one month before attempting coitus. The male should consume Shali rice with Ghrita (ghee) and milk. Taila and masha should be consumed by the female

**Male aspect:**

a. Ghrita: It has Vata-Pitta Shamaka qualities and is Sitavirya. It is beneficial for Rasa, Shukra, and Ojas. It also has the quality of Rasayana. All these aid in the proper functioning of Shukra and hence help to attain conception.

b. Shali: It alleviates Pitta Dosha. It is Madhura Rasa, Snigdha, Balya, Vrishya, Brimhana, and so on, which promotes the qualities of Shukra.essential for conception and pregnancy. Calcium and magnesium play a good role in regulating estrogenic level. The presence of folic acid in it helps in preventing neural tube defects. All these qualities help to promote the qualities of Artava.

**Female aspect:**

a. Masha: It is Vatahara, Snigdha, Ushna Virya, and Madhura Rasa. It has the qualities of Balya and Pumsatwa. Moreover, it is chemically constituted of proteins, carbohydrates, vitamin B, magnesium, calcium, iron, and folic acid, which are very essential for conception and pregnancy

b. Taila: It is effective in Vataja disorders and does not increase Kapha. It promotes strength (Balya) and helps in Yoni Vishodhana (cleanses the Yoni Marga). Tila Taila has a property of Garbhashaya Vishodhanam.

Hence, these qualities help the female reproductive organs to function properly, leading to fertilization. Normalcy of psychology or happiness of mind of the couple is one of the most important factors for conception. Stress, anger, and despair can disturb the phenomenon, leading to diminution of sexual vigour. The position of the couple during coitus also has a good role to play in attaining conception. The woman should lie in supine position, so that all the Doshas remain in their normal locations and it also aids improper perception of the Beeja.

**Garbhadana Yogya Ayu (Appropriate Age for Conception)**

The age factor plays an important role in achieving a good offspring since an individual (wife or husband) is only able to produce a healthy child biologically after achieving sexual maturity. Acharya Charaka suggests that at the age of 16 years, the male becomes sexually mature, while Acharya Sushruta said that males are fully mature at the age of 25 years and females at the age of 16 year. As both spouses at this age are full of bravery and vigour, the born child also possesses these qualities.<sup>8</sup>

**GARBHINI PARICHARYA**

**TABLE 1**

month	Charaka <sup>9</sup>	Sushruta <sup>10</sup>	Vagbhata <sup>11</sup>	Harita <sup>12</sup>
1	she should take non-medicated milk repeatedly in desired quantity.	sweet, cold, and liquid diet be taken.	medicated milk, timely in specific quantity. for first twelve days she should take ghrita extracted from milk and medicated with shaliparni and palash.	madhuyashti, parushak, madhukpushpa, available drugs should be taken with butter and honey.
2	milk medicated with madhura drugs	sweet, cold, and liquid diet be taken	sweet milk treated with kakoli	

3	milk with honey and ghrutam. Dauhruda utpatti should be fulfilled	sweet, cold, and liquid diet be taken, sweet milk treated with kakoli	Dauhruda utpatti should be fulfilled	krishara olio prepared with rice and pulse. Dauhruda utpatti should be fulfilled	
4	butter extracted from milk in the quantity of one aksha or milk with butter.	cooked shashti rice with curd,dainty and pleasant food mixed with milk and butter and meat of wild animals. Dauhruda-specific longings during this period have been elaborately described and should be completed.	one aksha of butter	cooked rice.	Milk with butter
5	ghritam prepared with butter extracted from milk	cooked shashti rice with milk,dainty and pleasant food mixed with milk and ghrutam and meat of wild animals	ghritam prepared with butter extracted from milk		ksheeryavagu

6	ghritam medicated with the drugs of madhura group	ghrutam or rice gruel medicated with gokshura	madhur aushadh sidha ghritam	sweetened curd	Ksheers arpi
7	ghritam medicated with the drugs of madhura group	ghritam medicated with prithakparnyadi group-vidarigandhadi grp of drugs.	ghritam medicated with the drugs of madhura group	Ghrutkhanden	

8	rice gruel prepared with milk and mixed with ghruta should be given.	for clearing the retained faeces and anulomana of vayu , the asthapana basti evacuative enema should be given	same basti prescribed by susruta with deletion of three drugs as shatapushpa, bala, atibala	ghrutapurak/ ghevar- a kind of sweet preparation.
			with bala, atibala, satapuspa, palala-pestled sesamam seeds , milk, curd, mastu, oil, salt, madanphala, honey and ghritam. This should be followed by use of anuvasana basti-unctuous enema of oil medicated with milk and decoction of drugs of madhura group.	

**POSTNATAL FACTORS**

**Care of new-borns**

Care of all new-borns includes immediate and through drying, skin to skin contact of the new born with the mother, cord clamping and cutting after the first minutes after birth, early initiation of breast feeding, and exclusive breast feeding.

**IMMEDIATE CARE**

Every birth is an emergency and the systemic treatment of the new born with the utmost attention is crucial for the baby's revival. Ayurveda has a particular approach to this, and even today, some of the concepts hold strong. Charaka says that attendant should care the new born in following way. She should produce striking or rubbing of stones near the pinna and to sprinkle hot and cold water alternatively over face to relieve the baby

from the stress of the delivery. Then the oral cavity is cleansed with fingers wrapped with cotton to clear the oral cavity. Then the brahmarandra are covered with pichuto prevent injuries. Later Ghrita mixed with rock salt given orally for producing emesis is advocated to clear out the swallowed liquor to prevent the complication like aspiration. The umbilical cord is cut to the appropriate length and Jathakarma should be done according to rituals. Then the first feed is given with the combination of honey and ghee.

Striking of stones near the base of ear might have been advised to examine the condition of central nervous system which resembles to certain extent with Moros's reflex. Advice to clean anus and elevate the palate is probably given to emphasize specific examination of these body parts. Sprinkling with hot and cold water advised by

Charaka has been explained by Chakrapani that the hot or cold water is to be used according to specific season. However, it might have been prescribed for alternate use.

Praasana should be done after establishment of lactation. Mainly three types of Praasana are explained, of which the foremost is Suvarna praasa. Suvarnapraasa is the procedure by

which Swarna along with some herbal drugs is administered to a neonate for gaining Positive qualities of life.

Though all the classics have given description of various procedures to be employed in the management of new-born child, however, there is difference of opinion in sequence of these procedure as shown in following table.

**TABLE 2**  
**VARIOUS PROCEDURES OF NEW-BORN CHILD**

S.NO	C.S <sup>13</sup>	S.S <sup>14</sup>	A.S <sup>15</sup>	A.H <sup>16</sup>
1	Striking of Stones	Cleaning of Vernix Caseosa	Cleaning of Vernix Caseosa	Cleaning of Vernix Caseosa
2	Irrigation of mouth with cold or hot water	Cleaning oral cavity with rock salt and ghrita	Irrigation of body with bala taila	Irrigation with bala taila
3	Resuscitation	Tampon application on forehead	Striking of stones	Striking of stones
4	Bath and cleaning of anus	Cutting of umbilical Cord	Resuscitation	Cutting of umbilical Cord
5	Cleaning of palate	Revival with sprinkling of cold water	Cutting of umbilical cord	Bath
6	Application of head	Jathakarma	Bath	Cleaning and elevation of palate
7	Induction of emesis	Licking of honey,ghrta,gold etc	Cleaning of throat and elevation of palate.	tampon application on forehead
8	Cutting of umbilical cord	Balataila massage	tampon on head	Licking of drugs
9	Jatakarma	Bath	Licking of drugs	induction of emesis
10	Licking of hone&ghrta	-	induction of emesisjatakarma	Jatakarma
11	-	-	Jatakarma	-

**ACHESTA BALAKA CHIKITSA (RESUSCITATION OF UNCONSCIOUS OR ASPHYXIATED CHILD)**

If the child is asphyxiated then Fanning with winnowing basket made of krisnakaplika,ieisika,or nala,munja,vamsa etc or a blackened broken earthen pot should be done . This fanning and other procedures i.e., striking of stones near the ear base and irrigation of face with hot or cold water should be continued until the neonate is revived or its respiration has established properly.

**PROCEDURE OF BATH OF NEONATE AND WATER TO BE USED FOR BATH**

After massaging the child with balatailaand giving due consideration to the period, viation or influence of doshas and also strength of

the child ,the bath should be given with lukewarm decoction of kshiravrksa in case of dominance of pitta,with lukewarm sarvagandhodaka,ie decoction of eladi groups of drugs if vata is dominant and with the lukewarm water in which heated gold or silver has been dipped or lukewarm decoction of leaves of kapha pittha.when the child has comparatively less strength or influence of doshas and, the bath should . The bath is given keeping in mind the Desa, kalaand bala of the baby.<sup>17</sup>

**SAMANYA PARICHARYA (GENERAL NURSING CARE OF THE CHILD)**

The child should be wrapped with linen cloth and made to sleep on a bed covered with linen cloth. Vagbhata I says that ear and temporal region of the child be covered with tampon impregnated with oil or ghrita. He should be to sleep on a

cushion made of linen cloth keeping the head on east side. Ewers filled with water and consecrated with mantras should be kept towards the head of the child and also on both sides of door of the room.

#### **RAKSHA KARMA**

All around the dwelling place of puerperal woman and the child the twigs of adani, khadira, karkandhu, pilu, and parusaka should be hung or strewn and sarsapa, atasi, tandula, and kakanika should be strewn. Until the period of naming ceremony i.e., for ten days tandula bali oblation should be performed continuously morning and evening both the times. A pestle should be placed in oblique position over door still.

A packet containing Vacha, kusta, ksaumaka, hingu, sarsapa, atasi, lasuna, kakanika and guggulu etc. rakshogna drugs behung on the upper portion of door frame or else kept over the door still. Small packets of these very drugs should be tied on the neck of the puerperal woman and child, oversthali, ewer filled with water, bed and both the panels of door. Fire should be lit daily with the woods of kanakakantaka ortinduka t inside the labour ward. The woman having qualities described earlier and other well-wisher woman should remain awaken for ten or twelve days. The labour ward should be full of gifts, auspicious, recitations, blessings, praises, playing of music and musical instruments, clean and dainty food and drinkables along with loyally devoted and delighted persons. For the fortune and welfare of the mother and child the brahmanas possessing knowledge of Atharva veda should perform santihoma morning and evening both the times<sup>18</sup>

#### **RAKSHA KARMA ON SASTHI RATRI**

On the 6th night after birth, rakshakarma by offering sacrifices, should specifically be done. The family members and friends should remain awaken happily. Entire rakshakarma is aimed at offering protection from infective disorders to the mother and child. It is just possible that various drugs prescribed for the purpose might be either making the environment free from infective organism or else reduce the virulence of these organisms. The sixth days rituals might have been advised because the risk of tetanus to the neonate is maximum up to this period, if not, this might be reflected the social custom prevailing even today.

#### **FEEDING**

Since mother does not sufficient lactation in the first few days after delivery the following method is undertaken till lactation is established.

Day 1-Combination of Honey and Ghee mixed with Ananta in the quantity that will the Baby's palm three times a day along with breast feeds.

Day 11&111-Ghee mixed with laxmana along with breast feeds

Day IV- Honey, ghee combination is given only twice and rest all the time breast feeding is done

#### **CLOTHES AND BEDDING**

Clothes and bed should be smooth and soft. Preferably white and made up of silk.

#### **GENERAL CARE AND HYGINE**

After making the child to attend to the regular natural calls and maintain the Hygiene.

#### **SWARNAPRASHANA**

Administration of processed gold in children is a unique practice mentioned in Ayurveda as "Swarnaprashana". Acharya Kashyapa explained evidently the administration of Swarna (gold) in children for the benefits of improving intellect, digestion and metabolism, physical strength, immunity, complexion, fertility, and life span. It can be said that the benefits of Swarnaprashana can be attained from infancy to adulthood with a wide range of actions influencing the growth and development of a child

#### **OTHER GENERAL MANAGEMENT**

After naming ceremony, physical examination of the child to assess the longevity stay in kumaragara, detailed description of kumaragara and kumaradhara, and period for leaving the kumaragara or sutikagara etc have been described by all the authors. Besides, special bed, toys and playground for child. Upavesana, annaprashana, and karnavedana etc samskaras have also been explained. Specific recipes of gold or other medicine for longevity, enhancement of bala, buddhi, and medha, diet required and diseases inflicting during entire span of childhood have also been described. Caraka giving short description of the factors responsible for proper growth or diseases of new born says that dietetics and other mode of life prescribed for woman during antenatal period are congenial to the new born and beneficial for proper growth and development. Abnormally used dietetics and mode of life kill the new born in the same way as a recently, planted plant, not possessing strong roots, gets destroyed by wind and heat.

### Treatment Modalities In Pediatrics

The treatment of children is a very difficult job because children are of delicate nature and do not have the capability to express their problems. Children are not matured and stable both mentally and physically and the stability and maturity vary in different ages of childhood. Thus, treatment modalities are different for different ages.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT

The same drugs that are used in adults are also used in Paediatrics but with a lesser dose. The drugs used should be sweet and used with ksheera, madhu, Ghrita and the drugs are Teekshna, Rooksha, Guru, Katu vipaki all are avoided. The dose specification for different age is different and needs consideration.

### II. CONCLUSION

Pregnancy and childbirth are one of the most critical events in a woman's life cycle. According to a recent World Health Organization survey, approximately 830 people die every day from preventable causes linked to pregnancy and childbirth. Malnutrition can harm both the mother and the foetus if there are macro and micronutrient imbalances before and during pregnancy. Ayurveda plays an important role in preventing obstetric complications, protecting the health of both the mother and the infant, and providing easy, healthier, and successful treatments for common ailments. Health care can influence children's physical and emotional health, growth, and development and their capacity to reach their full potential as adults. Healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults. So, Mother and child health care through Ayurveda lays the foundation of a good life.

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