

PRECONCEPTION CARE-AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH

Sonali Ganguly¹, Kaushalya Khakhlyar²

¹PG Scholar, ²Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Prasuti Tantra & Stree Roga, Govt. Ayurvedic College, Jalukbari,
Guwahati-14, Assam, India

Email: sganguly888@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Pregnancy and parenthood are amongst the most exciting times in the life of an individual. It brings with it joy, contentment and anticipation. Ante natal care and post natal care are very important to ensure the well being of both the mother and her child. But, preconception care is also equally important. For healthy young couples as well as couples facing fertility issues, the preconception care as per *Ayurveda* ensures a physically, mentally, intellectually healthy progeny. To prepare for the desirable and quality pregnancy outcome, preconception care is essential and may reduce the risk of adverse outcomes such as congenital defects, miscarriage and preterm delivery. To prepare for the desirable and quality pregnancy outcome, preconception care is essential and may reduce the risk of adverse outcomes such as congenital defects, miscarriage and preterm delivery. *Ayurveda* stresses immense significance to the preparation of both partners prior to conception.

Keywords: Pregnancy, *Ayurveda*, preconception care.

INTRODUCTION

Preconception care is considered as an important component of health care for woman of the reproductive age. Preconception care is a broad term that refers to the process of identifying social, behavioral, environmental, and biomedical risks to a woman's fertility and pregnancy outcome and then reducing these risks through education, counseling, and ap-

propriate intervention, when possible, before conception

It is defined as a set of interventions that aim to identify and modify biomedical, behavioral and social risks to the woman's health or pregnancy outcome through prevention and management. It emphasizes all the health issues that require action before conception for maximal impact.

Ayurveda has given detailed descriptions of the preconception care to be given for both the partners.

Ayurvedic treatments in preconception care, encourage the body's innate ability to cleanse, renew and heal itself. *Panchakarma* procedures, not only ensures a total cleansing of the body and the reproductive organs, but also rejuvenates and improves the vitality of a person.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To collect the literary resource regarding preconception care in *Ayurvedic* treatise and its utility in present era's obstetric care
2. To promote anxiety free pregnancy and healthy progeny through preconception care as per *Ayurveda*.
3. To reduce the risks and adverse pregnancy outcomes as encountered in previous pregnancies through *Ayurvedic* principles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a conceptual literary study on the preconception care as mentioned in *Ayurveda*.

DESCRIPTION

When a couple is seen and counseled about pregnancy, its course and outcome well before the time of actual conception is called precon-

ception counseling. Objective is to ensure that a woman enters pregnancy with an optimal state of health which would be safe both for herself and the fetus.

Ayurveda is a science which has both, preventive as well as curative aspect. According to *Ayurvedic* principles in order to have a physically, mentally and spiritually healthy progeny, both the partners male as well female, must need to have proper preconception counseling and care.

In the *Vedic* literature, *Shodasha Samskaras* have been mentioned. Out of these, 16 *samskaras*, *Vivaha* and *Garbhadhana* are the two *samskaras* which are concerned with the preconception care.

Ayurvedic texts have mentioned about *Garbhadhan vidhi* or method of impregnation thereby laying stress on the importance of preconception care to be taken in case of all the couples.

Care should be taken from the very beginning, right from neonatal care to care during menstrual phase to a healthy pregnancy, thereby leading to healthy mother and healthy child who aids in creating a diseases free society and therefore help in the development of the nation.

Various instances are found in this context which is as follows:

1. Mode of living during menstruation (*Rajaswalacharya*)^{2,3,4}

Indication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Havishya (meal prepared of ghee, <i>Sali</i> rice and milk) • Yawaka (meal prepared of barley and milk) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During first 3days of menses, she should remain isolated. • On 4th day of menstruation, wear white or new clothes and ornaments and then with the enchanting of religious hymns, should see her husband first clad in white garments.
Contraindication	<i>tikshna, katu, lavana</i> substances.	<i>Nasya, Swedana and Vamana</i>

2. Criteria for marriage

Acharya Sushruta mentioned that the marriageable age for man and woman is 25 and 12 years respectively while *Vagbhata* said 21 and 12 years respectively. *Vagbhata* added with this, the qualities of appropriate girl for marriage i.e.- she should not belong to the same *gotra*(*atulyagotra*), not suffering from any contagious diseases, beautiful, modest, having complete body parts, delicate etc.⁵

3. Appropriate age for conception

Age factor plays a significant role in achieving a good progeny because biologically a person (wife or husband) is capable of producing a

healthy child, only after attaining sexual maturity. *Charaka* opines that the male become sexually mature at the age of 16years, while *Sushruta* said that male at the age of 25years and females at the age of 16years are completely mature⁶, hence, they should attempt for achieving conception. Since both the partners are full of valour and vigour at this age, the born child also possesses these qualities.

4. Factors responsible for conception⁷

Various factors play role in achieving proper conception. *Ayurveda* mentions about the significance of four factors required for conception which are as follows:

<i>Ritu</i>	Time of ovulation, when the chances of conception are Maximum.
<i>Kshetra</i>	the reproductive tract where fertilization and implantation occurs
<i>Ambu</i>	nourishment including all the hormones
<i>Beeja</i>	healthy sperm and ovum

5. Adoption of measures prior to conception

- The couple should firstly undergo *shodhan* therapy starting with *purvakarma snehan-svedan* then *vaman, virechan, asthapan and anuvasan basti*.⁸
- Both the partners should observe celibacy (*brahmacharya*) for one month before attempting coitus.⁸
- The male should consume *Sali* rice with *ghrita* and milk. *Taila* and *masha* should be consumed by the female.⁹

The reason of such dietetic regimen in light of science may be as follows:

1. Male aspect:

a) *Ghrita*- It has *vata-pitta shamak* qualities and is *shita virya*. It is beneficial for *rasa, shukra and oja*.¹⁰ It also has the quality of *rasayana*.¹¹ All these aids in the proper function-

ing of *shukra* and hence, helps to attain conception.

b) *Sali*- It alleviates *pitta dosha*. It is *madhura rasa, snigdha, balya, vrishya, bringhana* etc. which promotes the qualities of *shukra*.¹²

2. Female aspect:

a) *Masha*- It is *vatahara, snigdha, ushna virya, madhura rasa*. It has the qualities of *balya* and *punstwa*.¹³ Moreover, it is chemically constituted of proteins, carbohydrates, vitamin B, magnesium, calcium, iron and folic acid which are very essential for conception and pregnancy. Calcium and magnesium play a good role in regulating estrogen level. The presence of folic acid in it helps in preventing of neural tube defects. All these qualities help to promote the qualities of *artava*.

b) *Taila*: It is effective in *Vataja* disorders and does not increase *Kapha*. It Promotes strength (*balya*) and helps in *yoni vishodhana*(cleanses

the *yonimarga*).¹⁴ *Tila taila* has a property of *Garbhashaya vishodhanam*.¹⁵ Hence, these qualities help the female reproductive organs function properly leading to fertilization.

सौमनस्यं गभधारणानां (Ch/Su/25/40)

- Normalcy of psychology or happiness of mind of the couple is one of the most important factors for conception.

दौर्मेनस्यमवृष्याणाम् (Ch/Su/25/40)

Stress, anger, despair etc 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 in proper perception of the *beeja*.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda focuses on the promotion and preservation of health and prevention of diseases. The preconception care is a cognitive measure as mentioned in all the *Ayurvedic* texts. Therefore, to achieve conception, contentment or balanced psychology of both the partners is very essential. It has been advised only healthy, physically and mentally fit couples should attempt for conception. The dietary regimen has been mentioned in the classics for the couple prior to conception in order to nourish and enhance the functional activities of reproductive organs. Hence, *Ayurveda* offers a radical and informative knowledge about the preconception care which may be adopted by all the couples planning for pregnancy and also may be implemented as an integral part in the community healthcare.

REFERENCES

1. DC Dutta's Textbook of Obstetrics, pg-116, 8th edition, Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers (P) Ltd.
2. Charak Samhita Hindi Translation by Pt.Kashinath Shastri and Dr. Gorakhnath Chaturvedi Vol.I, Sharir Sthan 8/5, Pg-919, Reprint 2013, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi.
3. Sushruta Samhita Hindi Translation by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri, Vol-I, Sharir Sthan 2/26, pg-17, Reprint 2011, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi.
4. Ayurvediya Prasuti Tantra evam Stree Roga part I by Prof. (Km.)Premvati Tewari, Pg- 65-66, Reprint 2007, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi.
5. Ayurvediya Prasuti Tantra evam Stree Roga part I by Prof. (Km.)Premvati Tewari, Pg- 79, Reprint 2007, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi.
6. Sushruta Samhita Hindi Translation by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri, Vol-I, Sharir Sthan 10/58, pg-110, Reprint 2011, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi
7. Sushruta Samhita Hindi Translation by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri, Vol-I, Sharir Sthan 2/35, pg-19, Reprint 2011, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi
8. Charak Samhita Hindi Translation by Pt.Kashinath Shastri and Dr. Gorakhnath Chaturvedi Vol.I, Sharir Sthan 8/4, Pg-919, Reprint 2013, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi.
9. Sushruta Samhita Hindi Translation by Kaviraj Ambikadutta Shastri, Vol-I, Sharir Sthan 2/30, pg-18, Reprint 2011, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi.
10. Charak Samhita Hindi Translation by Pt.Kashinath Shastri and Dr. Gorakhnath

Chaturvedi Vol.I, Sutra Sthan 13/14, Pg-258, Reprint 2013, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi

11. Bhavaprakasha of Bhavamishra, Hindi translation by Shree Brahmasankara Mishra and Shree Rupalalaji Vaishya, 1st part, Ghrita varga, sloka1-3, page-775, Reprint 2015, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Bhawan, Varanasi.
 12. Bhavaprakasha of Bhavamishra, Hindi translation by Shree Brahmasankara Mishra and Shree Rupalalaji Vaishya, 1st part, Dhanya varga, sloka7, page-635, Reprint 2015, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Bhawan, Varanasi.
 13. Charak Samhita Hindi Translation by Pt.Kashinath Shastri and Dr. Gorakhnath Chaturvedi Vol. I , Sutra Sthan 27/24, Pg-529, Reprint 2013, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi.
 14. Charak Samhita Hindi Translation by Pt.Kashinath Shastri and Dr. Gorakhnath Chaturvedi Vol.I, Sutra Sthan 13/15, Pg-258, Reprint 2013, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi.
 15. Bhavaprakasha of Bhavamishra, Hindi translation by Shree Brahmasankara Mishra and Shree Rupalalaji Vaishya, 1st part, taila varga, sloka2-4, page-779, Reprint 2015, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Bhawan, Varanasi
 16. Charak Samhita Hindi Translation by Pt.Kashinath Shastri and Dr. Gorakhnath Chaturvedi Vol. I, Sharir Sthan 8/6, Pg-920, Reprint 2013, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi.
-

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict Of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Sonali Ganguly & Kaushalya Khakhlary: Preconception Care-An Ayurvedic Approach. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2017 {cited September, 2017} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/3420_3424.pdf