



**PRE-CONCEPTIONAL CARE & COUNSELING - ITS IMPORTANCE IN PRESENT ERA
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO GARBHADANA VIDHI**

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ABSTRACT

Preconception care refers to healthcare interventions and services provided to individuals or couples before pregnancy to optimize their health and promote favorable outcomes for both the mother and the baby. Preconception care encompasses a range of interventions, including health promotion, risk assessment and management of pre-existing conditions. In Ayurveda Garbhadhana Vidhi is use of Panchakarma shodhana, Pumsavana Karma, Garbha Sthapaka aushadhas during pre-conceptional period aims in getting a good progeny. The purpose is not only to purify the body but also it serves the purpose of Garbhashaya Shodhana where the healthy gametes after fertilization will get implanted. In this era of competition & stress solutions are needed to strengthen the reproductive capacity of a woman who wishes to conceive. The fast changing and modernized lifestyle have brought in a host of diseases which causes infertility, recurrent abortions, congenital anomalies etc. Ayurveda gives great importance to the preparation of both partners before conception, both physically as well as mentally. It also ensures in improvement and promotion of maternal and fetal outcomes, thereby reducing maternal and fetal morbidity and mortality rates. The study's rationale is to throw light on preconceptional care through Ayurveda and create awareness about the Ancient form of life style in preventing various lifestyle disorders and promoting reproductive health in both partners.

INTRODUCTION

मातृ स्वास्थ्यम् लोक स्वास्थ्यम् | If Mother is healthy ultimately there will be a healthy nation. Healthy state of women is very much needed for the society for growth and prosperity. According to *Maharishi Vyasa Garbhadhana Vidhi* is one of the *samaskara of shodasa samaskara*, it was first time described in *Grihya sutra* and later in *Dharama shastra*. It consists of Age of couples their characters & qualities, Contraindication and indications for coitus, Position, days, time for coitus and Putreshti Yajna. Pre conceptional care and counseling is done for both the couples which plays an important role in improving healthy reproductive outcome. It reduces the risk of complications such as preterm birth, LBW and congenital abnormalities. Couples receive information and guidance about healthy lifestyle, such as maintaining a balanced diet, regular exercise, managing stress, and avoiding harmful substances like smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. This empowers couples to make informed decisions and adopt behaviors that support their overall health and not only increase the chances of a healthy pregnancy but quality of progeny is achieved.

Pre-conception Care and Counseling

(Acc to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Pre-conception Care- A set of interventions that aim to identify and modify biomedical, behavioural and social risks to a women's health or pregnancy outcome through prevention and management.

Pre-conception counseling- When a couple is counseled about pregnancy, it's course and outcome well before the time of actual conception.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

स्त्रीपुंसयोरव्यापन्नं शुक्रशोणितं गर्भाशययोः श्रेयसीं प्रजामिच्छतोस्तदर्था भिनिर्वृत्तिकरं कर्मापदेक्ष्यामः || (Ch. Sh 8/3)

Acharya Charaka in *shareera stahana* expalains that the up-liftment of human race by getting **श्रेयसीं प्रजा** (A baby meant for social & self (spiritual) welfare).

सौमनस्य गर्भधारणम् | (Ch. Su 25/40)

According to *Acharya Charaka* it is one of the **Adravya chikitsa** and not only maintaining *सम दोष समाग्निश्च सम धातु* but *प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनः* is utmost important for achieving pregnancy and avoiding *kama, krodha, dwesha, irshya* which yields best for achieving pregnancy.

As per understanding in modern the aims and objectives of preconception care and counseling are it prevents preterm births, still births, unintended pregnancies, transmission of HIV/STDs, complications during

pregnancy and deliveries, LBW, stunting, Neonatal infections and birth defects.

When to initiate?

- Premarital counseling.
- Planning for conception.
- A visit for pregnancy tests (if test is negative).
- Postpartum checkups.

Why it is needed?

- To prepare couple psychologically for pregnancy & the responsibilities to become parenthood.
- To reduce maternal and child mortality.
- To promote healthy lifestyle.

Some Ayurvedic measures which can prevent mother and fetus

Data	Measures	Prevents
1. Increasing marital age- Elderly Primi	<i>Jeevaniya</i> and <i>Garbhasthapaka aushadhi</i>	Mother- Abortions, PIH, GDM, Prolonged labor. Fetus- Preterm birth, IUGR Congenital malformations.
2. Healthy weight- Ideal BMI: 20 to 24.9 kg/m ² If underweight If overweight	<i>Garbhasthapaka aushadhi</i> Weight gain before pregnancy Weight loss before pregnancy	Mother- PIH, DVT, GDM. Fetus- IUGR, Macrosomia, Congenital malformations.
3. Environments- Organic solvents, Heavy metals, Pesticides	<i>Garbhasthapaka aushadhi</i> Wear masks Protective clothings	Abortions, LBW, Preterm birth, Congenital malformations.
4. Radiation Hazards- X-rays	<i>Garbhasthapaka aushadhi</i> Wear dosimeter	Abortions, IUGR, Congenital malformations.
In addictions 1. Smoking 2. Alcohol 3. Marijuana, Cocaine, Heroin (Should be evaluated for HIV & Hep B)	Ask, Advice, Assess, Assist, Arrange (5A'S) Withdrawal	Abortions, LBW, Preterm birth, IUGR, Congenital anomalies. FAS (Fetal alcohol syndrome)

Psychological stress affecting fertility

During Stress body triggers the response by activating the hypothalamic- pituitary- adrenal axis, releasing stress hormones like cortisol through adrenals. These increased cortisol from adrenals sends feedback mechanism to hypothalamic- pituitary- gonadal axis (controls reproductive system) to slowdown the activity of releases FSH and LH leading to derangement of brain and ovary. If there is no release of FSH and LH ultimately there will be no menstruation and no ovulation.

Stress resilience

- Daily exercises, sufficient sleep and relaxation techniques (*Yoga, pranayama*).
- Identifying on ongoing stressors, resources to help the patients problem, solving and conflicting resolution skills.
- Maintain positive mental health.
- One can go through *Abyanga, Avagaha sweda* and *Shirodhara*.

Few diseases and there treatment which we see in day today practices- If Mother is K/C/O

Condition	Recommendations	Choice of medicine	Panchakarma	Prevents
Diabetes Mellitus	Encourage pre conceptional HbA1C below 7%. Management with diet and exercise.	<i>Nishamalaki</i> <i>Katak kadhiraadhi</i> <i>kashyam</i> <i>Asanadi kashyam</i>	<i>Yapana Basthi</i> <i>Vamana</i> <i>Virechana</i>	Maternal- PIH, Vaginal infections. Fetus- Preterm labour, Macrosomia, Polyhydrominos, Perinatal death.
Hypertension	Optimize for BP control. Low dose aspirin.	<i>Mukta vati</i> <i>Prabhakar vati</i> <i>Pravala pisti</i>	<i>Shirobasthi</i> <i>Shirodhara</i> <i>Virechana</i>	Maternal- Superimposed preeclampsia, Placental abruption.

	Low sodium intake. If ACE inhibitors- safer antihypertensive			Fetus-IUGR Preterm delivery, IUD.
Thyroid diseases Hypothyroidism	Euthyroid profile should be maintained.	<i>Hampsapadi kashaya</i>	<i>Pratimarsha nasya.</i> <i>Varunadi kashaya</i> <i>basthi</i>	Maternal- Abortions, Preeclampsia Fetus- Preterm birth, Placental abruption.
Hyperthyroidism	Ensure iodine- sufficient diet.			
Epilepsy	Change to less teratogen medication. (Levetiracetam or Lamotrigine)	<i>Swarna vasant malini rasa,</i> <i>BVC, Kalyanaka ghritha</i>	<i>Shirodhara Nasya</i>	Maternal- Seizure Fetal- Structural anomalies, IUGR, Still births, Oligohydrominos.
Connective tissue diseases- (SLE, RA, APLA)	Best time to attempt conception is during period of inactive disease.	<i>BVC</i> <i>Aamvatari kasahya</i> <i>Ekanaga veera rasa</i>	<i>Vaitarana Basthi</i> <i>Kshara Basthi</i> <i>Yapana Basthi</i>	Maternal- PIH, Anemia, Thrombocytopenia Fetus- IUGR, IUD, LBW.
BOH (TORCH, SLE, APLA)	Alleviate anxiety and improve the psychology of the couples. Detailed obstetrical history. Counseling about recurrence risk. Management of underlying cause.	<i>Jeevaniya and Garbhasthapak aushadi</i>	<i>Uttarabasthi</i> <i>Shirodhara</i>	
Ectopic Pregnancy	Main concern is the risk of recurrence. Whenever there is amenorrhea, pregnancy test is done- if Positive- High resolution TVS is done.	<i>Garbhasthapak aushadhi</i>	<i>Virechana</i> <i>Uttarabasthi</i>	
HIV	Continue (ART) before and during pregnancy.	<i>Aamalaki Rasayana</i> <i>Mahasrhi Amruth kalash</i>	<i>Abyanga</i>	

Vaccinations and considerations

- Hepatitis B, TT, Influenza, Pneumococcus, Rabies- Can be advised in pre-conception and it prevents transmission of infection to infants.
- 3 month or longer should ideally pass between vaccination and conception attempts if these vaccinations are advised- MMR, Varicella-zoster, Yellow fever.

Family history of genetic diseases

Genetic counseling

- Carrier screening
- Discuss management of known genetic disorders before planning pregnancy
- Potential options of donor egg or sperm.

Importance of Panchakarma in Garbhadana Vidhi

Poorvakarma in Garbhadana Vidhi

अथाप्येतौ स्त्रीपुंसौ स्नेहस्वेदाभ्यामुपपाद्य,

वमनविरेचनाभ्यां संशोध्य, क्रमेण प्रकृतिमापादयेत् ।

संशुद्धौ चास्थापनानुवासनाभ्यामुपाचरेत्; उपाचरेच्च

मधुरौषधसंस्कृताभ्यां घृत

क्षीराभ्यां पुरुषं, स्त्रियं तु तैलमाषाभ्याम् । (C.Sha. 8/4)

Panchakarma- Shodhana during pre-conceptional helps in balancing the *Doshas*, *Dhatu*s and *Agni*, it detoxifies the body, prevents diseases and also promotes *vyadhi kshamatva*. As nowadays many miscarriages and other pregnancy complications have become very common there is a need of pre-conceptional *panchakarma shodana* for healthy pregnancy and safe delivery. Both the couples should undergo *snehana*, *swedana* followed by *Vamana* and *Virechana* than follow *samsarajana karma*. After *samyak samshodana* when body becomes *shuddhi* one should go for *Asthapana* and *Anuvasana basthi*.

Essential factors responsible for Garbhadhana

धुवं चतुर्णां सान्निध्यात् गर्भः स्याद् विधिपूर्वकं ।

ऋतुक्षेत्राम्बुबीजानां सामग्र्यादङ्कुरो यथा ॥ (सु० सं० शा 2/33)

The main aim of *shodana* in pre-pregnancy is to achieve healthy spermatozoa and healthy ovum which will result in proper nidation of fertilized ovum in healthy reproductive system of the women.

Rutu- refers to period of ovulation, thus timely release of ovum will be ensured by process of *shodana*.

Kshetra- refers to Garbhasthaya which should be free from diseases and healthy endometrium is achieved by *shodana*.

Ambu- refers to *rasadhathu*, *shodana* improves the *jataragni* and it in turn improves the nutritious level of

body.

Beeja- *shodana* improves the quality of ovum and sperm.

SNEHANA	BASTHI	NASYA
Bahya Sneha- <i>Mahanarayana taila</i> <i>Dhanwantara taila</i> <i>Ksheera bala taila</i>	<i>Mustadi yapana Basthi</i> <i>Dashamoola Ksheera Basthi</i>	<i>Vata shrunga</i> <i>Laxmana moola</i>
Snehapana- <i>Kalyanaka ghruta</i> <i>Phala sarpi</i> <i>Mahakalyanaka ghruta</i>	<i>Madhutailika Basthi</i> <i>Balaguduchyadi Basthi</i>	<i>Shaphushpa taila</i> <i>Narayana taila</i>

Sthanika Chikitsa

After *sarvadehika shodana* the *sthanika shesha doshas* which are left can be removed by *yoni prakshalana*, *yoni pichu*, *yoni dhoopana*, *yoni lepa* and *uttara Basthi*. It

maintains the PH of vagina. Vaginal walls are very well suited for absorption of drugs because of vast network of blood vessels and it also maintains the reproductive health of the female.

Rasayana and Vajikarana

Female	Male
Prajasthapana gana like Aindri, Brahmi etc, helps in implantation and stabilization of pregnancy. Ausadha yoga: <i>Amalaki Rasayana</i> <i>Lashuna Rasayana</i> <i>Shatavari Ghruta</i> <i>Phalaghrita</i> <i>Shatapuspa churna.</i>	<i>Amalaki Rasayana</i> <i>Aswagandha rasayana</i> <i>Shilajatu Rasayana</i> <i>Chyavanaprasha avaleha</i> <i>Kushmanda Rasayana</i>

Ahara

Male-	Female-
On the day of coitus- मधुरौषधसंस्कृता घृत, क्षीरा, Shali, Mamsaras, <i>Ikshumoola, Yastimadhu, Ashwagandha, Amalaki.</i>	On the day of coitus- तैल and माषा <i>Lashuna, Kulatha, Sarshapa, Tila.</i>

As in Modern view advice for

- **Fruits** which are rich in natural antioxidants, anti-inflammatory phytonutrients which are rich in Vitamin C and folate and fiber are advised.

Ex- Bananas, Apple, Oranges, berries, guava.

- **Vegetables** not only green but also red and orange colored vegetables are also advised.
- **Whole grains** like wheat, rice, Oats, barley etc.
- **Low fat diary** foods which are rich in calcium like milk, yogurt.
- **Proteins** and fibers like nuts, seeds, peas.

These will assist in increasing stores of vitamins, iron and calcium.

Contraindications

- Raw shell fish, sword fish, marlin, uncooked meat contains Methyl mercury- affects fetal CNS.
- Excessive Caffeine intake- Lowers the fertility rate- because these increases the estrogen level and affects the ovulation and corpus luteal function

through alteration in hormone level and with higher early follicular estrogen level.

- Eating junk food leads to weight gain- consuming Ajinomoto (Monosodium glutamate) now a day's which is present in tasting powders, coloring agents, readymade food items like instant noodles, upama etc., and consuming food in plastic containers results in 'anxiety like behaviors because plastic contains BPA (Bisphenol A) these leaks when hot substances come into contact with it.

DISCUSSION

The **pregnancy should always be planned it should not be by chance**, the saying holds good in preventing the health of mother and baby. According to WHO the global fertility rate has reduced one in every four couples in developing countries, *samskaras* like *garbhadhana vidhi* the procedures and instructions described under it might serve the issue to some extent. Pre-conceptual counseling in **Puerperium** is important as there should be minimum 3 years gap between two children (Acc to WHO). Advising **yogaasanas and pranayama** in Pre-

conception helps in increasing blood flow to reproductive organs and promotes fertility. Drugs used in **Panchakarma shodana** spreads throughout the body through cellular levels due to *vyavayi*, *vikasi*, *ushna* and *tikshana* properties and further helps in *srotho shodana*. **Garbhasthapak aushadhis** has *tikta rasa*, *laghu guna*, *sheeta virya* and *madhura vipaka* which acts as *sthambana* and helps in implantation and stabilization of pregnancy. In Ramayana the **पुत्रेष्टि यज्ञ** was performed by Dashratha which culminated in the birth of **Sri RAMA** and his brothers.

CONCLUSION

Due to competitive life, the advance generation desire only one child and willing that their child should be physically, mentally & intellectually stronger than them. But in this stressful society people give more importance to career not paying attention towards **proper marital age, dincharya & ritucharya**. As a result they are more prone to physical & psychological problems. Pre conception care and counseling can provide global solution in several ways to achieve conception for those couples seeking for a healthy child. This ensures in preventing various problems related to mother and fetus.

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