



POSTNATAL CARE IN AYURVEDA: CONCEPT AND CLINICAL RELEVANCE OF SUTIKA PARICHARYA

Dr. Mrunali G. Phapale*

Assistant Professor, Streerog Evum Prasutitantra Dept., Tilak Ayurved Mahavidyalaya,
Pune, Maharashtra.

Article Received on 05 April 2026,
Article Revised on 25 April 2026,
Article Published on 01 May 2026

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19882093>

*Corresponding Author

Dr. Mrunali G. Phapale

Assistant Professor, Streerog Evum
Prasutitantra Dept., Tilak Ayurved
Mahavidyalaya, Pune, Maharashtra.



How To Cite This Article: Dr. Mrunali G. Phapale* (2026). Postnatal Care in Ayurveda: Concept and Clinical Relevance of Sutika Paricharya. World Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, 15(5), 516-526.
This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

ABSTRACT

The postnatal period is a crucial phase in a woman's life, marked by significant physiological, hormonal, and psychological changes as her body returns to its pre-pregnancy state. Ayurveda offers a comprehensive approach to postnatal care through **Sutika Paricharya**, a regimen focused on restoring strength, balancing Doshas, and promoting lactation. The primary aim is to alleviate **Vata Dosha**, which often becomes aggravated due to blood loss, physical exertion, and emotional stress after delivery. Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* emphasize practices like **oil massage**, **abdominal binding**, and a **nourishing diet** to help the mother regain lost vitality, enhance milk production, and reduce the risk of complications. Specific therapies such as **medicated enemas**, **purgation**, and **bloodletting** are

contraindicated during this phase. The integration of Ayurvedic principles into postnatal care not only accelerates recovery but also supports mental and emotional well-being. The use of herbs and personalized diet recommendations in **Sutika Paricharya** aims to restore the mother's physical charm, emotional health, and overall vitality, promoting a holistic and balanced recovery. This ancient wisdom provides an effective, low-tech approach to maternal health and well-being.

KEYWORDS: Postnatal Care, Sutika Paricharya, Ayurveda, Puerperium, Vata Dosha.

INTRODUCTION

Postpartum period is an important phase of transition in women's life following childbirth. This period is also known as puerperium, starts following the expulsion of the placenta until complete physiological recovery of various organ systems when maternal physiological and anatomical changes return to the nonpregnant state.^[1] The postpartum period divides into acute, early, and late phases, each having unique clinical considerations and challenges.^[2] This period is critical to the health and survival of a mother and her newborn as it is the most vulnerable time after birth. Lack of care may result in death or disability and missed opportunities to promote healthy behaviors.^[3] WHO guidelines recommend essential postnatal care, extra care for low birth weight babies, and timely follow-up visits.^[4]

In Ayurveda, the postnatal period is called Sutika Kala, and care is Sutika Paricharya. A woman after expulsion of placenta is called Sutika. Prasava causes Dhatu Kshaya and depletion of Bala. Paricharya includes Ahara, Aushadha, and Vihara for at least one and half month upto 6 months, aiming restoration of health and Dhatu Paripoornatha.^[5]

Ayurveda emphasizes care of stree at every phase of life through Rajaswala Paricharya, Garbhini Paricharya, and Sutika Paricharya. Puerperium is the period when pelvic organs return to pre-pregnant state both anatomically and physiologically.^[6] After delivery, woman becomes weak due to Dhatu Kshaya, Kleda, and blood loss. Mithyaachar in this period may result in incurable or difficult-to-cure diseases.^[7] Proper puerperial care restores pre-pregnancy status.^[8]

Sutika Kala requires special attention as it is associated with Vata aggravation, blood loss, and physical exhaustion. Sutika Paricharya includes specific dietary guidelines, lifestyle measures, and therapeutic practices such as oil massage and rest, aimed at restoring strength, improving digestion, supporting uterine involution, and enhancing lactation.

The post-natal period lasts about six weeks and is crucial for recovery of physical strength, hormonal balance, and lactation. Inadequate care may lead to weakness, delayed recovery, and complications. Ayurvedic principles provide a holistic approach for maternal recovery through diet, lifestyle, and natural therapies, ensuring safe recovery of both mother and newborn.

AIM: To review the principles and importance of post-natal care through Ayurveda.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the concept of Sutika Paricharya described in classical Ayurvedic texts.
- To analyze the role of Ayurvedic practices in restoring maternal health and preventing complications after delivery.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Maternal morbidity is extensive and under-recognized following delivery. Measures to reduce and alleviate it must be sought. Among mothers in the sample, 85% reported at least one health problem in hospital, rising to 87% (84-90%) of those at home; 76% (71-81%) reported at least one health problem following eight weeks post-delivery.^[9]

Reviewing all these facts there is a need to find solution to incorporate the knowledge of all health systems to overcome this problem. Due to development of foetus, instability of body tissues, exertion of labour pains and excretion of moisture and blood, the woman becomes very weak. Following regimen described by Ayurveda for post natal woman, she regains strength in tissues, achieves fast improvement and maintains her health.

Principle of sutika paricharya^[10]

- ❖ Vrani – tissue injury
- ❖ Raktasravajanya Dhatukshaya – depletion of body tissues due to blood loss
- ❖ Kledajanya Dhatukshaya – tissue depletion caused by excessive fluid/ kleda/pathological exudation
- ❖ Pravahanjanya Vata Prakopa – aggravation of Vata due to the strain of expulsion (labor process)
- ❖ Dhatukshayatmaka Agnimandya – diminished digestive/metabolic power due to tissue depletion
- ❖ Stanya Pravartana – initiation or promotion of breast milk secretion
- ❖ Stana Pushti – nourishment and proper development of the breasts
- ❖ Yoni Sanrakshana – protection and care of the reproductive organs (vaginal/uterine health)

Sutika-kala (Duration of post natal phase)

Post natal phase is named as ‘sutika kala’ in Ayurveda. This term is obtained from the word ‘prasuta’ (~mother following delivery). There are different opinions about the duration of this

period, which ranges from six weeks to six months and some believe that it lasts until the re-establishment of menstrual cycle. Ayurveda classics has described management of sutika (~post natal woman), but Kashyapa has described in detail about it. He has mentioned that following delivery of child, the placenta is expelled; following that the women is called as 'sutika'.^[11] Sutika-kala (duration of puerperium/ post natal phase) mentioned by various Ayurveda classics can be tabulated as

Table 1: Sutika-kala (Duration of post natal phase).

Ayurveda classic text	Sutika-kala (duration of puerperium)
Sushruta samhita ^[12]	Following 1 ½ month of regulated specific dietetics and mode of life of the woman becomes free from the epithet of sutika and have cited the opinion of others that the women should be called sutika till she doesn't restart her menstrual cycle
Ashtanga hridaya samhita ^[13]	Same as Sushruta samhita, i. e. 1 ½ month
Kashyapa samhita ^[14]	Six months
Yoga ratnakara ^[15]	Special dietetic management for 1 month
Bhavaprakasha samhita ^[16]	In addition agreeing explanation of Sushruta (i. e. 1 ½ month), he has cited that following subsidence of complications and aggravation of doshas, the woman should give up specific mode of life following 4 months

Reviewing views of Ayurveda classical texts, four opinions of exact durations of puerperium come out, i. e. 1 ½ month, re-manifestation of menstruation, four months and six months.

Following delivery, ahara-rasa (food-juice) reaches the breasts and forms milk, remaining rasa getting transformed into the blood circulating in whole body reaches to reproductive system. Following achievement of refill of dhatus and steadiness of body, the blood gathered in uterus is discharged cyclically.^[17]

Present study protocol of Sutika Paricharya is divided into three major components as Follows

1. Ashwasana (Psychological Reassurance)
2. Vihara (Normal daily activities and therapeutic procedures)
3. Aahara (Normal diet in puerperium)

Ashwasana (Psychological Reassurance)

After expulsion of fetus, woman should be immediately encouraged with sweet spoken words.^[18]

Vihara (Normal daily activities and therapeutic procedures) It includes various regimens consisting of internal, external and or local therapies beneficial for Sutika.

Table 2 shows differences in the opinion of Acharyas regarding the vihara.^{[19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26]}

Aahara (Normal diet in Post Natal Period) Dietary regimen according to different Acharyas is summarized in Table 3.^{[24][25][27][28][29]}

Table 2: Various regimen of internal, external and or local therapies for Sutika.

Ayurveda classic text	Therapies
Charaka ^[19]	Snehapana (Internal oleation therapy) Abhyanga (Massage) Udarveshtana (Abdominal compression) Parishechana (Hot water pouring)
Sushruta ^[20]	Abhyanga (Massage) Parisinchana (Hot water pouring) Dushta shonit shudhi (Purification of Blood) Parishechana (Hot water pouring)
Vridddha Vagbhata ^[21]	Abhyanga (Massage) Snehapana (Internal oleation therapy) Udarveshtana (Abdominal compression) Abhyanga (Massage) Udvartana (Massage with dry herbal powder)
Vagbhata ^[22]	Yoni abhyanga (Vaginal massage) Abhyanga (Massage) Snehapana (Internal oleation therapy) Dusht shonita shudhi (Purification of Blood) Udarveshtana (Abdominal compression)
Kashyapa ^[23]	Aashwasana (Psychological Reassurance) Sanvahana (Gental massage) Udarmardana (abdominal massage) Udarveshtana (Abdomenal compression) YoniSnehana (Vaginal oiling) Yoni Swedan (Vaginal fomentation) Snana (Bath) Dhupana (Medicated fumigation)
Others	Shonita shudhhi (Purification of Blood) Yonyabhyanga (Vaginal massage) Yoniswedana ^[11] (Vaginal sudation) Nitya Swedan (Daily sudation) Abhyanga ^[12] (Massage)

	Yonipindana (vaginal pressing/ compression) Nitya swedan (Daily sudation) Abhyanga ^[13] (Massage)
--	--

Table 3: Dietary regimen for Sutika.

Ayurveda classic text	Diet
Charak ^[19]	Susnigdha Yavagu Aapyayana (Ingestion of Rice Gruel)
Sushrut ^[20]	Vidarigandhandi, Yava, kola, kulattha sidhha Sneha yavagu (Rice Gruel medicated with group of drugs starting from (<i>Desmodium Gangeticum</i> . And the drugs like <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , <i>Ziziphus jujube</i> , <i>Dolichous biflorus</i> .) Snigdha Jangalrasa (Non veg. Soup) Shalyodana (Rice)
Vriddha Vagbhata ^[27]	Vidaryadigan kwath (Decoction of Group of drugs starting from (<i>Desmodium Gangeticum</i>) laghuna ksheeren (Light Milk) or Yavagu dravam (liquid Rice Gruel) Yush of Yava, kola kulattha (Soup of pulses medicated with <i>Hordeum vulgare</i> , <i>Ziziphus jujube</i> , <i>Dolichous biflorus</i>) Laghu Aahar (Light Diet) Jangalrasa (non veg soup) Jeevaniya, Brimhaniya, Madhur, Vatahar sidhha Hridya Annapana (Consumption of Restorative, Nutritious, Sweet and pleasant diet)
Vagbhata ^[28]	Vatoghna Aushadha Sadhit Peya (liquid diet medicated with herbs useful in decreasing vata dosha) Vidaryadi Varg Siddha Yavagu either Snehasidhha or Ksheersidhha (Rice Gruel prepared from Group of drugs starting from <i>Desmodium gangeticum</i> either with ghee or with milk) Brimhan (Nutrition) after 7 days Pishitsevan (consumption of meat) after 12 days
Kashyapa ^[29]	Manda (the clear supernatant water in which rice is boiled) Pippali Nagarashritam Alpa Sneha Saindhav Rahit Yavagu (Low fat and without salt Rice Gruel medicated with <i>Piper longum</i> and <i>Zingiber officinale</i>) Sasneha Lavan Yavagu (Rice Gruel containing fat and salt) Sasneha Salavan Kulattha Yush (Soup of <i>Dolichous biflorus</i> containing salt and fat)

	Jangal Mansaras (Non veg. Soup) Kushmand, Mulaka, Yervaruka Ghritbhritani (Consumption of <i>Benincasa hispida</i> , <i>Raphanus sativus</i> , <i>Cucumis sativus</i> fried with ghee)
Other	Upvasa & Nagar Haritaki, Guda sevana 1st day (On 1st day fast and consumption mixture of <i>Zingiber officinale</i> and <i>Terminalia chebula</i> with jaggery) Ushna Kullatha Yusha 2nd day (On 2nd day hot Soup of <i>Dolichous biflorus</i>) Panchakol Yavagu 3 rd Day (On 3rd day Rice Gruel medicated with <i>Piper longum</i> , <i>Piper chaba</i> , <i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> and <i>Zingiber officinale</i>) Chaturjat Mishrit Yavagu 4th day (On 4th day Rice Gruel mixed with <i>Cinnamomum Zeylanicum</i> , <i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> , <i>Cinnamomum tamala</i> and <i>Mesua ferrea</i>) Shalishashti Odan 5 th day [24] (On 5th day rice having maturity 60 days boiled with water) Snigdha, pathya, alpa, bhojan prayoga [25] (Light & beneficial Diet)

Table 4 - Significance of Postnatal Regimen in Sutika Paricharya.

Drug/Therapy	Action/Effect
Sunthi (<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rosoe.)	Increases digestive power as well as does garbhashaya shodhana to remove lochia and other retained products of conceptus
Haritaki (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	Does vatanulomana which helps to wash out the abnormal contents from uterus
Jaggery	Supports digestive power as well as balances vata.
Kulattha (<i>Dolichos biflorus</i> Linn.)	Cleanses abnormal blood through uterus as well it will decrease kleda (abnormal moisture).
Chaturjataka, panchakola	These drugs are digestive and possessing nice odour which will helpful improving digestive power and makes pleasant to eat by soothing mind
Shali, shastika, meat	Restores lost nutrients
Oils/ghee	Strengthen digestive system, balances vata and helpful in evading cold infection
Pippali (<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.), pippalimula (<i>Piper longum radix</i>), chavya (<i>Pepper chaba</i>), chitraka (<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> Linn.),	Improves weak digestive power, gives good odour to eatables and also acts as garbhashaya shodhaka

Bala-taila	Assists to strengthen the muscles, ligaments, joints and tendons of the whole body. It is also useful for soothing skin and relieving pain
Irrigation	Abnormal blood (accumulated in uterus) is excreted properly, balances vata and enhances process of involution
Mardana (massage)	Rapid penetration of oil deep into tissues, consequently supports appropriate operation of vata and body channels by improved transdermal assimilation of nutrients
Abdominal compression	Produces compression of abdomen and it avoids occurrence of hallow space, which prohibits vitiation of vata

15. Apathya (contraindicated factors) in Sutika Paricharya from Ayurveda

1. **Krodha** – Anger
2. **Aayasa** – Excessive physical exertion / fatigue
3. **Shoka** – Grief or sorrow
4. **Maithuna** – Sexual intercourse
5. **Divaswapa** – Daytime sleep
6. **Uccha Sambhashana** – Speaking loudly or excessive talking
7. **Yana-Yana** – Traveling (especially by vehicles)
8. **Chira Asana** – Prolonged sitting
9. **Ati Chankramana** – Excessive walking or movement
10. **Sheeta Sparsha / Sheeta Jala Seva** – Exposure to cold / use of cold water
11. **Vata Seva** – Exposure to cold wind
12. **Atapa Seva** – Excessive exposure to sunlight/heat
13. **Viruddha Ashana** – Intake of incompatible foods
14. **Adhyashana** – Overeating or eating before previous meal is digested
15. **Asatmya Bhojana** – Consumption of unwholesome or unsuitable diet

DISCUSSION

Sutika Paricharya, or post-natal care in Ayurveda, plays a crucial role in a mother's recovery following childbirth. During the post-natal period, the body undergoes significant changes, especially with the depletion of vital tissues and blood loss. This leads to the aggravation of Vata Dosha, which needs to be pacified for proper recovery. Ayurveda emphasizes a holistic approach that incorporates diet, lifestyle modifications, and external therapies to restore health and well-being.

A key focus of Sutika Paricharya is the nourishment of the mother's body through diet. Immediately after childbirth, warm, light, and easily digestible foods are recommended to strengthen digestion (Agni). Gradually, more nourishing foods such as Mamsa Rasa and Madhura Dravyas are introduced to promote tissue regeneration and improve lactation. This dietary regimen helps in the formation of Rasa Dhatu, which directly supports the production of Stanya (breast milk).

External therapies like oil massage (Abhyanga), the use of Bala Taila (specific oils), and body wrapping (Udaravestana) also play a significant role in pacifying Vata and promoting musculoskeletal recovery. Practices such as warm baths, adequate rest, and maintaining hygiene are essential for faster recovery and preventing complications.

The benefits of Sutika Paricharya extend beyond physical recovery—it aids in balancing mental health by preventing conditions like stress, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, it supports the proper involution of the uterus, ensuring that the reproductive system returns to normal function. By following these Ayurvedic practices, the mother not only recovers her strength but also ensures healthy lactation, which is crucial for the baby's growth and development.

Overall, Sutika Paricharya offers a comprehensive and balanced approach to post-natal care, addressing both the physical and emotional aspects of maternal recovery.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ayurvedic post-natal care, as outlined in Sutika Paricharya, provides a holistic and scientifically sound approach to maternal recovery. By focusing on pacifying Vata Dosha, improving digestive strength, and nourishing tissues, it promotes the mother's physical healing and emotional well-being. The regimen's emphasis on personalized diet, proper rest, hygiene, and external therapies ensures a safe and smooth recovery, preventing postpartum complications. This natural, low-tech method not only supports healthy lactation but also fosters optimal maternal health for long-term well-being and the healthy development of the newborn.

REFERENCES

1. Chauhan, Gaurav. Prasanna Tadi. "Physiology, Postpartum Changes." StatPearls, StatPearls Publishing, 21 November 2021.

2. Romano M, Cacciatore A, Giordano R, La Rosa B. Postpartum period: three distinct but continuous phases. *Journal of prenatal medicine*. 2010 Apr; 4(2): 22.
3. Belachew, Tefera & Taye, Ayanos. Postnatal Care Service Utilization and Associated Factors among Mothers in Lemo Woreda, Ethiopia. *Journal of Women's Health Care*. 2016; 5 (10).
4. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/97603/9789241506649_eng.pdf.
5. Agnivesha, Charaka. *Charaka Samhita*. Revised by Charaka and Dridhabala. Vaidya Jadavaji Trikamji Acharya, editor. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2015.
6. Dutta DC. *Text book of Obstetrics*. Konar Hiralal, editor. 6th ed. Kolkatta: New Central Book Agency (P) Ltd; 2004; 145.
7. Sushruta. *Susruta Samhita*. Jadhavji Trikamji, editor. 5th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 1992; 389.
8. Vagbhata. *Astanga Sangraha*, Gupta Atridev, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Oriental Publishers; 1993; 1: 288.
9. Glazener CM, et al., Postnatal maternal morbidity, extent, causes, prevention and treatment, PMID, 7612509, May 2012.
10. Vd. Nirmala Rajwade, *Kaumarbharyatantra(stree-vidnyaneeya)*, sutika vidnyaneeya, 5th ed, Pune, vaidyamitra prakashan, 1998; 378.
11. Satyapala bhigacharya, editor, *Kashyapa samhita of Vriddha Jivaka, khilasthana*, chapter 11, verse no. 6, 4th ed., Varanasi, Chaukhamba sanskrit sansthan, 1994; 305.
12. Ambikadatta shastri, editor, *Sushruta samhita of Sushruta*, vol i, sharira sthana, chapter 10, verse no. 18, re-print ed., Varanasi, chaukhamba surbharati prakashanaa, 2010; 103.
13. Premvati Tewari, *Ayurveda prasuti-tantra evam stri-roga*, part ii, chapter 9, 2nd ed., Varanasi, Chaukhamba orientalia, 1996; 569.
14. Satyapala bhigacharya, editor, *Kashyapa samhita of Vriddha Jivaka, khilasthana*, chapter 11, verse no. 6, 4th ed., Varanasi, Chaukhamba sanskrit sansthan, 1994; 305.
15. Datto ballala borkar, translator, *Sartha Yogaratnakara*, vol ii, sutika roga chikitsa, chapter 44, re-print ed., Pune, Shri Gajanan book depo prakashana, 1984; 639.
16. Purushottam nanal, translator, *Sartha Bhavaprakasha*, purva khanda, chapter 3, verse no. 5-6, 1st ed., Pune, Shri Gajanan book depo, 1929; 42.

17. Premvati Tewari, Ayurveda prasuti-tantra evam stri-roga, part ii, chapter 9, 2nd ed., Varanasi, Chaukhamba orientalia, 1996; 572.
18. Kashyapa. Kashyapasamhita (Vridhajeevakeey Tantra) Sharma H. editor. 4th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 1988; 11/18: 305.
19. Charaka. Charak Samhita. Sastri Kashinath, Chaturvedi Gorakhanath Acharya, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Choukhambha Bharati Academy; 2005; 951.
20. Susruta. Susrut Samhita. Jadhavji Trikamji, editor. 5th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 1992. Sharirsthana, 10/16; 18: 389.
21. Vagbhata. Astanga Sangraha, Vol. I. Gupta Atridev, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Oriental Publishers; 1993. Sharirsthana 3/39; 288.
22. Vagbhata. Astanga hridaya. Vaidya Paradkar H, editor. 1st ed. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series; 1995; 376.
23. Kashyapa. Kashyapa Samhita (Vridhajeevakeey Tantra). Sharma H, editor. 4th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 1988; 305-306.
24. Harita. Harita Samhita. Shastri Ramavalamba, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Prachya Prakashan; 1985; 405.
25. Bhavamishra. Bhavaprakasha samhita. Misra Brahmasankara, Vaisya Rupalalaji, editors. 8th ed. Varanasi. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 1993; 96.
26. Sastri Brahmasankar, editor. Yogratnakara. 5th ed. Varanasi. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 1993; 426.
27. Vagbhata. Astanga Sangraha, Vol. I. Gupta Atridev, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Oriental Publishers; 1993. Sharirsthana 3/38; 288.
28. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridaya. Vaidya Paradkar H, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Series; 1995; 377.
29. Kashyapa. Kashyapasamhita (Vridhajeevakeey Tantra). Sharma H, editor. 4th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 1988. 11/23- 26; 306.