

Research Article

Preconceptional care in Ayurveda – A Boon to have Supraja

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ABSTRACT:

The divine blessing of motherhood can be made more blissful with Ayurveda. Preconception care can be defined as the provision of biomedical, behavioral, and social health interventions to women and couples before conception.⁽¹⁾ It aims to improve maternal, paternal, and child health, in both the short and long term.⁽²⁾ The preconceptional care in Ayurveda was described centuries back to get a disease-free and good progeny by following the regimen and rituals. Recent research shows that each seminal ejaculation in intercourse depletes the body energy of male counterpart, hence to maintain the quality and energy of sperm, (following of celibacy) for one month before (Conception) was planned Individuals with a good mind and healthy body can build up a strong community.

When the best quality of sperm and ovum meet, a healthy progeny is born. The baby will grow up with a sound mind and healthy body. When each couple adopt a preconceptional care, the future generations will be wise and intelligent. Ayurveda Preconception measures help to achieve the goal of preparing couples for a new life and to contribute toward a healthy society. Ayurvedic remedy for getting healthy progeny emphasizes again the preventive aspect of Ayurveda.

KEY WORDS: Rutu, Kshetra, Beeja, Ambu, Ayurveda

INTRODUCTION:

Aim and objectives:

- To promote healthy progeny (Su praja).
- Identify the risk factors for adverse maternal & foetal outcome.
- Educate & Counsel the couple & treat the medical conditions prior to conception.

The preconceptional care in Ayurveda concentrates on following criteria which all together is termed as garbha sambhav samugri.

- Rutu
- Kshetra
- Ambu
- Beeja

Rutu

Rutu can be considered as Garbhadhan yogya kala (appropriate age of man and woman for conception). To get a child of possible good qualities, male at age of twenty five and female at the age of sixteen years should try for pregnancy, at these ages both the partners will be full of energy and physically mature too.. Another instance of ritu is ritukala (the time

when the sperm and ovum could meet during intercourse).

According to Susruta duration of ritukala is 12 days (starts from 4th day of cessation of menstruation)⁽³⁾. It is called ritukala because in this period of woman's menstrual cycle garbhasaya gather the seeds (sperms) and there will be an opportunity of pregnancy. As lotus flower closes after sunset in a similar way after rutukala the yoni of women get constricted and does not allow the entry of sukra⁽⁴⁾

Kshetra

Kshetra is the place where one can reside, here it is garbhasaya or kshetra which becomes the adobe for garbha. Condition of garbhasaya is important for proper nutrition of garbha just like ploughed land sharpens the speed of germination of seeds.

Acharya Charaka while explaining janapadodwamsa stated that dushita desa/ desa vikruti can lead to improper growth of creepers and plants etc⁽⁵⁾. This explains the importance of desha or kshetra in cases of birth abnormalities

Ambu

Ambu is the nutritional fluid which supplies nutrition to the garbhashaya and fetus. Ambu is formed from Rasa dhatu ⁽⁶⁾ which is formed out of the essence of food. If proper nutrition is not supplied will lead to Garbha vikrutis.

In Ayurveda, nourishment of the foetus is described in two parts. First, when the foetal body parts are not perceptible, it gets nourishment by Upasneha (osmosis or diffusion) and by Upasveda (absorbing moisture). Second, when the foetal body parts become observable, it receives nutrition by permeation through the Lomakoopa (pores of the skin) of the body and the Nabhinadi (umbilical cord).

Beeja

Beeja denotes the Shukra (sperm) of men and Artava (ovum) of women ⁽⁷⁾. Beeja is the seed or the gamete which is important for the procreation; it is the combination ovum of woman and sperm of man.

Shukra which is like Sphatika (white colored rock crystal), Drava (liquid), Snigdha (unctuous), Madhura (sweet) and Madhugandhi (having smell of honey) is desirable for producing offspring but some others say that it should be like Tail (oil) or Kshaudra (honey). ⁽⁸⁾

Artava (menstrual blood) which resembles the blood of a Shasha (rabbit) or Laksha rasa (liquid essence of lac) and that which does not stain the cloth is greatly praised ⁽⁹⁾

For better quality of Beeja following Ahara is advised by Ayurveda for both male and female before conception

Male

- **Ghrita:** It has Vata-Pitta Shamaka qualities and is Sitavirya (cold potency). 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.
- **Shali:** It alleviates Pitta Dosh. It is Madhura Rasa, Snigdha, Balya, Vrishya, Brimhana, and so on, which promotes the qualities of Shukra.

Female

- **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. Calcium and magnesium play a good role in regulating estrogen level. The presence of folic acid in it helps in preventing neural tube defects. All these qualities help to promote the qualities of Artava.
- **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 vigor. 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 Beej.

Vital Care during Preconception as per Ayurveda.⁽¹⁰⁾

- 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

DISCUSSION:

Modern lifestyle leading to increase in stress is a major cause for infertility. Along with the lifestyle habits such as alcohol consumption and the environmental toxicity affecting the sperm's count, quality, and motility, it also depletes the zinc level in the body, whereas in females, it affects the ovulation and menstruation, leading to the hypothalamic pituitary ovarian dysfunction.

The consumption of Masha, Tila Taila, milk, and ghee by couples will help in the production of efficient sperm and ovum, which will result in good progeny. All the methods used in Ayurveda preconception care are affordable and the drugs are also easily available. Ayurveda Panchakarma therapy provides physical and mental fitness. It acts at the hormonal level and keep hormones at normalcy.

Hence, the hormonal defects of infertility can be rectified by Panchakarma procedures. These would also help in the removal of the accumulated toxins. Diet explained will provide essential micro- and macronutrients to the would-be mother and future child. Along with the classically told methods, few additions such as folic acid, iron, and calcium supplementation and taking care of body mass index, avoiding habits such as alcohol and tobacco, and avoiding use of narcotics would yield much more better and desired results.

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.

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