



## CONSTIPATION – A CAUSE OF DISHARMONY IN PREGNANCY – AN AYURVEDIC REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Defecation is a natural process of expelling waste products from the body. Daily bowel movement is important to clean the colon and whole body by removing toxins. Persistent, difficult, infrequent and seemingly incomplete defecation is called as constipation. It is a symptom not a disease but it will cause lots of discomfort to the body. It is a common complaint in clinical practise, more seen in women than males. Some gynaecological diseases, stress, hormonal imbalance will leads to irregular bowel habits in women. Most of the pregnant

women will be having this complaint. There is anatomical, physiological and hormonal adaptations in pregnancy. Due to these changes every pregnant woman will face some difficulties like heartburn, nausea, vomiting, pedal oedema, constipation in three trimesters. Acharya Kashyapa says that the diseases which are seen in any other individual will seen in pregnant ladies also as dosha, dushyas of the body are same. As *shakrut* and *mutra nishkramana* is the main function of *Apana vata*, it should maintain in normal state.

**Methodology:** To review the *Ayurvedic* literature and contemporary science regarding *Vibandha in garbhini* and its management and to enlighten the importance of *garbhini paricharya* in this present era. **Discussion:** *vibandha* or constipation is a condition which disturbs the daily life of the women specially in pregnancy. Although it looks simple problem, in pregnant lady it shouldn't be neglected. **Conclusion:** Maintaining the regular bowel habits depends on the individuals own food habits along with behavioral pattern. The

aim of *garbhini paricharya* is maintain *vata* in normal state by *snigdha, ushna upachara*. So following proper *garbhini paricharya* mentioned in classics will help in preventing constipation problem during pregnancy.

**KEYWORDS:** *Constipation, Vibandha, Garbhini, Pregnancy, progesterone.*

## INTRODUCTION

The word Constipation comes from Latin word – ‘Constipare’ – To press or crowd together. It refers to persistent, difficult, infrequent or seemingly incomplete defecation.<sup>[1]</sup> It is a symptom not a disease. In general population incidences varies from 2-3% and it is common in females than in males due to some of the reasons like Anatomical relation - Female reproductive system and excretory system are closely related in woman. Pressure from gravid uterus<sup>[2]</sup> or any mass causes constipation in females, Hormonal modulations, stress and tendency of withholding natural urges. Stress can alter body rhythm by which gut motility reduces. During stress blood & oxygen redirected to brain, so there is diminished GI reflexes in ongoing chronic stress.<sup>[3]</sup> Due to inconvenience of using public toilets, more concern about hygiene women are more likely to withhold the natural urges. These conditions will produce constipation in women.

## CAUSES OF CONSTIPATION

**The following are some common causes of constipation**

**Diet-** Junk food, spicy food, bakery food, smoking, alcohol, less intake of fibrous food and water.

**Side effects of medicine-** Opioids, Antihistamine, Antidepressant and Anti convulsants etc.

**Endocrinal and metabolic-** In hypothyroidism there is decreased metabolism, In Diabetes mellitus increased sugar level causes damage to the nerve endings of small intestine causes constipation.

**Structural-** Pelvic floor dysfunction, Descending perineal syndrome, Anal fissure, pressure by large fibroid or cyst.

**Psychological-** Voluntary withholding due to fear of pain, stress, anxiety.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Vibandha in garbhini**

There is no difference in the physical and physiological disorders of pregnant woman from any other individual, because *Dosha* and *Dushya* of the body are same. So the disease which are seen in normal person will be seen in pregnant and *nidana*, *samprapti* are also same.<sup>[5]</sup> Acharya Sushruta mentioned use of *madhura dravya siddha basti* in pregnant lady in 8<sup>th</sup> month.<sup>[6]</sup> It indicates that there is incomplete evacuation during pregnancy. In order to prevent constipation, Acharya Kashyapa mentioned *Mrudu virechaka* or *Anulomaka* drug for pregnant lady in 4<sup>th</sup> and after 4 months.<sup>[7]</sup> Painful defecation with pain in anal region, bleeding per rectum in *Garbhini* are mentioned by Acharya Kashyapa.<sup>[8]</sup>

In pregnancy there is Atonicity and diminished motility of the gut due to the effect of Progesterone. Progesterone is called as pregnancy hormone, which has effect on GI system, by decreasing peristalsis and slow down the gastric emptying by this leads to constipation in pregnancy.<sup>[9]</sup> Pressure of Gravid uterus on pelvic colon, Diminished physical activity in pregnancy also causes difficulty in defecation. Iron supplements enhance the absorption in gut and slow down the gastric motility. So the ladies who will take iron supplements usually present with complaint of constipation.<sup>[10]</sup> Constipation is pronounced in Twin pregnancy due to increased pressure over pelvic colon. Hyperemesis gravidarum, Severe type of vomiting in pregnancy causes constipation in later stage due to excess fluid loss, dehydration and starvation.

Constipation is a common problem in *Sutika avastha* also due to following reasons- Delayed GI motility, Mild ileus following delivery, Perineal discomfort, Less intake of fluids, fruits & fibrous food, Immobilisation, Reduced sleep. Female with Pelvic floor muscle dysfunction, Pelvic organ prolapse – Especially in Rectocele, Fibroid uterus, Endometriosis also suffer from constipation.

**MANAGEMENT**

The diseases of the pregnant women should be treated with the use of *mrudu*, *madhura*, *shishira*, *sukumara aushadha*, *ahara* and *upachara*.<sup>[11]</sup> All *shamana aushadhis* should be soft and should be given with food or drinks. It should consist of articles which are *mruduveerya* and *madhura*, shouldn't cause any harm to the fetus.<sup>[12]</sup> Acharya Vagbhata mentioned that due to *udavarta* in pregnancy *vibandha* will occur, that can be treated with *vatahara*, *snigdha annapana*.<sup>[13]</sup> While explaining *Garbhini paricharya* in 8th month, our Acharyas mentioned as *Madhura aushadha siddha Asthapana basti* and *Anuvasana basti*, *Ksheera yavagu* with

*Sarpi* orally for *Purana Pureesha shuddhi* and *Vaataanulomana*.<sup>[14]</sup> The aim *garbhini paricharya* to maintain *vata* in normal state. 4<sup>th</sup> month and thereafter to maintain proper *vata gati*, *Aragvadha ksheerapaka* is advised.<sup>[15]</sup> Acharya Haritha specially mentioned treatment for *Garbhini vibandha*: *Hareetaki* with *Shunti* and *Guda* or cool decoction of *Triphala*.<sup>[16]</sup> The pregnant women should be treated just like pot filled with oil, a slightest oscillation of such pot cause spilling of oil, similarly slightest excitement to the pregnant woman can initiate abortion.<sup>[17]</sup>

### Whether virechana and basti can be given in Pregnant lady?

According to Acharya Kashyapa only after 4<sup>th</sup> month *Mrudu Virechana* can be given to Pregnant lady. In *Taruna garbhaavasta* i.e before 4 months *virechana*(*mrudu* also) shouldn't be indicated. That will cause *nabhi prapeedana* and *samkshobhana* in abdomen and due to *Guru*, *Ushna*, *Vahana guna* it may cause *Garbha srava*.<sup>[18]</sup> If *virechana* is required instead of *teekshna* drugs *phalavarti* should be given.<sup>[19]</sup> *Asthapana* and *Anuvasana basti* also in early pregnancy cause *Garbhasrava* or *Heenanga garbha* due to *Tejas/ Teekshnata*.<sup>[20]</sup> Strong enemas may affect the autonomic nervous system governing myometrium. Enemas through the enteric nervous system acts on the sympathetic innervation, induce uterine contractions. So avoid Stimulant laxative like Dulcolax, EX-lax and fleet enemas. They can reflexly stimulate gravid uterus.

In puerperium Early ambulation, Adequate intake of water and fibrous rich food, Mild laxatives – Isopgol husk 2tsp at bedtime helps to remove constipation related problems.

### CONCLUSION

Constipation is a common symptom which everybody faces once in life time. It cause discomfort moreover risk in pregnancy and puerperal period. It is very important to expel unwanted things from the body to maintain good health. So that regular bowel habit should be maintained. As constipation is physiological in pregnancy, diet and lifestyle modification is the best way to overcome this problem. Fibre rich food like Green leaves, vegetables like Onion, Bottle gourd, Raddish, Brinjal, fruits like Banana, Pappaya, regular exercise, pranayama will help in maintain regular bowel movements in pregnancy. According to *masanumasika garbhini paricharya ksheera, ghruta, navaneeta*, plenty of fluids in the form of *madhura aushadha siddha ksheerapakas* will definitely help in normalising *vata* and prevent *vibandha*.

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