Garbha Sanskar

Dr.ANU.S.SOMAN
**What Is Garbhasanskar?**

The Sanskrit word garbh means fetus in the womb and sanskar means educating the mind. So, garbhasanskar essentially means educating the mind of the fetus with certain pregnancy practices and routines.

**Definition of Garbha-**

“The term Garbha is used only when, after the union of shukra & shonit with Aatma in uterus. Unless the entry of Aatma, only union of shukra & shonit is not considered as garbha.”

Of all the four ashramas (stages) of life, grihastha ashram (household life), is the best one with its foundation being – raising children that will benefit the society and contribute towards its collective well-being as adults.

Ayurveda has long recognized the need for mentally, spiritually, and physically preparing expecting mothers to make the deliveries as safe and healthy as possible.

This usually starts with Ayurvedically preparing couples planning to get pregnant, about three months prior to conception.

Ahara (diet), vihara (lifestyle), sadavrutta (moral conduct), along with varied therapies, underlines what Ayurveda calls grabha sanaskar.

The vedas mention the mantra (chant) “matrudevo bhava” which means that the mother is the highest consciousness.

In the vedas, it is believed that a child’s mental and behavioral development starts as soon as conception.
The child’s personality begins to take shape in the womb and is very much influenced by the mother’s state of mind during pregnancy.

In Garbhasanskar, sanskar is basically the modulation of the qualities of the parents.

The process of selecting and transmitting positive influences to the fetus by means of yoga, reading positive literature, positive thinking, healthy eating, and cheerful behavior is known as ‘garbhasanskar’.

This term is nothing but an extension of the concept of achara rasayana i.e.right code of socio-behavioral conduct.

**Garbha- Basic Elements** - The garbha is formed from 6 basic elements-

Space, Wind, Fire, Water, Earth (5 basic elements) and Aatma.

**Components of garbha/ fetus which are formed by 5 basic elements**-

a. **Aakash/Space**- Shabd (speech), Shrotrendriya (Ear), all srotas in the body (sinuses & hollow structures), Mouth, Throat, Kotha (Intestines), Mind, Intellect, Sleep, Laziness, etc.

b. **Vayu/Wind**- Touch, Skin, Dryness, All body movements (internal & external), Respiration, Sweating, etc.

c. **Agni/Fire**- Roop (Beauty), Eyes(sight), Digestion, Body temperature, Medha (Grasping power), Varna (colour), Kanti (Reflection), Shourya (Bravery), Anger, etc.
d. **Jala/Water**- Tongue, Ras, Softness, Coldness, Oleation, Sweat, Cough, Meda, Blood, Mamsa, Sukhra, etc.

e. **Prithvi/Earth**- Smell, Nose, Gaurav (Steadi-ness), Hair, Bones, Nails, Teeth, Skin, etc.

**Garbha is also considered to be formed by 6 factors**-
Matruj (from mother), Pitruj (from father), Aatmaj (from aatma), Satvaj (from mind- man), Rasaj (from aahar) and Satmyaj (from factors which are habitual/good for mother)

**Components of garbha/ fetus which are formed by 6 factors**-

a. **Matruj bhava**- Skin, blood, Flesh, fat, Umbilicus, Heart, Liver, Spleen, Alimentary canal, etc.

b. **Pritruj bhava**- Hair, nails, Teeth, Bones, Veins & Arteries, Shukra, Muscles, Hormones, etc.

c. **Aatmaj bhava**- Birth in specific species, Longevity, Knowledge, Mann, Feelings, etc.

d. **Satmyaj bhava**- Longevity, Happiness, Cheerfulness, Capacity, Adjustments, etc.

e. **Rasaj bhava**- Development of body, growth, Nutrition, etc.

f. **Satvaj bhava**- Devotion, Hatred, Love, Memory, Bravery, Purity of Mind & Body, etc.

All these factors are very important in growth, formation, development of garbha. They work together hand in hand with each other. Single factor is not sufficient for the formation of fetus i.e. absence of any of the above factors make it impossible to form garbha.
Similarly garbha is formed of 4 factors

**Ritu** – Right time/period of conception.

**Kshetra** – Healthy uterus as well as a healthy to-be mother.

**Ambu** – Good quality nutrients for proper nourishment & development of the fetus.

**Beeja** – Healthy ovum and sperm.

A mother’s routine during pregnancy in the form of prayer (positive thoughts), mana–shakti (positive emotion), conversation with the fetus (talking) or expressing feeling (touching), is not only felt by the unborn baby but also has positive effects on the baby’s physical and mental health.

Therefore, in Ayurveda, garbhasanskar is considered a systematic way of molding the mental health of the child yet to be born. Ayurveda has given detailed descriptions of the do’s and don’ts of pregnancy.

**The Concept Of Sanskara In Ayurveda**

Sanskara here basically means those practices which cleanse the body, mind, and intellect through gunantaradhana (transformation/changes one’s qualities) are the turning points of life and need to be celebrated.

Sanskara are the main field of grihya sutras(domestic rituals). The Gautam Dharma Sutra (ancient Sanskrit text) has a list of 40 sanskara.

**According to Vyaasa Smriti, there are 16 sanskaras.**
1) Garbhadhan: The process of conception or the insemination process.

2) Punsavan: This sanskar is done for the intellectual and mental development of the baby in the womb.

3) Simantonnayan: This sanskar is done during the 4th, 6th and 8th month of pregnancy. (during this period mother starts bonding more intimately with her child)

4) Jatkarma: This sanskar is meant to clear bad omens from the infant’s environment. This is done for the health and longevity of the child.

5) Namkaran: This sanskar is done to decide the name of the infant. Usually done on the 11th day of the birth.

6) Nishkraman: It is done in the 4th month after birth. It is done to invoke the blessings of the five elements of nature. In this sanskara, the formal darshan (rituals) of sun and moon is done for the child.

7) Annaprashan: This is done during the teething period of the child. After this sanskara, the child can be fed grains.

8) Choodakaran /Mundan: The child’s head is shaved off during this sanskar. It is believed to strengthen the child’s intellectual abilities. Chooda means the ‘lock or tuft of hair’ kept after the remaining part is shaved off.

9) Karnvedha: In this sanskara, the child’s ears are pierced. This ancient practice is believed to have some relationship with the brain and the acupuncture points in the ear.

10) It is done when the child is a student, to bring the child closer to their guru or teacher. Through this, the child gets strength, energy, and splendor.
11) Vidyarambh/Vedarambh: It is done to start the formal education of the child.

12) Samavartan: It is done to mark the re-entry of the child from the gurukula back to society. It prepares the child for the future struggles of life.

13) Vivah: This is getting the children married when they grow up.

14) Vanprasth: As old age approaches, the person retires for a life of tapas and studies.

15) Sanyas: Before leaving the body, a person sheds all sense of responsibility and relationships to awake and revel in the timeless truth of the universe and reality.

16) Antyeshti: This is the last sanskara. After the person dies, the body is cremated in an antim sanskara which literally translates to ‘last rites’.

Out of these 16 sanskaras, garbhadhan, punsavan, and simantonnayan are conducted before the birth of baby, rest after birth.

**Sanskara Performed In Garbha Avastha: Ayurvedic Pregnancy Practices**

**Garbhadhana**: For conception, a normal reproductive tract, balanced hormones, sound mental health, healthy gametes, and the right age are required.

**Punsavana**: To ensure healthy progeny, a punsavana sanskara or garbhopacharais performed. It aims to achieve a successful conception and a stable pregnancy.
This special procedure is carried out between 8-11 weeks of pregnancy in ‘pushya nakshatra’ especially. In Ayurveda, a slew of Ayurvedic herbs and medicines are given for this sanksara.

These include putajivaka, vatankura, lakshmana, apamarga, sahachara, and others.

**Simantonayana**: This is performed in the fourth month of pregnancy in shukla paksha (bright lunar fortnight) with the presence of an auspicious nakshatra(a term for the lunar mansion in Indian astrology).

At the time of pregnancy, due to hormonal changes, a woman has to go through many discomforts which may cause emotional imbalances.

**Effects of Mantra/Music**: This has been proven that a fetus can respond to sounds. From the 7th month of pregnancy, the fetus can hear and respond to the surrounding sounds.

Let’s take a look at some antenatal Ayurvedic practices and routines (garbhasanskar) for pregnancy.
Masanumasik Garbhini Paricharya: Ayurvedic Antenatal Care

Ayurveda recommends the following supplementation for a woman during pregnancy.

**First Month:** Non-Medicated Milk in the desired quantity with a sweet and cold liquid diet. For the rest of the month, a milk decoction with bala (Sida rhombifolia).

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<th>Month</th>
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<td>First</td>
<td>Mucoid character (Kalal)</td>
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| Second | Solid, elongated or rounded mass.  
  - Solid= male  
  - Elongated= female  
  - Rounded= Transgender |
| Third | Budding seen – 5: one head, 2 upper & 2 lower limbs. All indriya & body parts become apparent |
| Fourth | Various body parts become conspicuous & stability to fetus |
| Fifth | Accumulation of blood & flesh is more in this month & mind becomes more enlightened. |
| Sixth | Development of strength & complexion of skin is more pronounced in this month. Intellect becomes more enlightened. Oja also increases. |
| Seventh | All the features get proper nourishment. All the major & minor body parts are more conspicuous or fully developed & whole body gets completely associated with vata, pitta & kapha |
| Eighth | Oja becomes unstable, so chances of still birth increases if delivered |
| Ninth | Activities of baby are more prominent in this month |
**Second Month:** Milk medicated with madhur (sweet) herbs. Milk decoction with bruhati (Solanum melenginum).

**Third Month:** Milk with honey and ghee (clarified butter). Milk decoction with the herb lakshmana (Ipomeoa sepiaria).

**Fourth Month:** Butter extracted from milk (20g) with cooked shashti rice and yogurt. Milk decoction with shaliparni (Desmodium gangeticum). This prevents intrauterine growth retardation.

**Fifth Month:** Butter extracted from milk with cooked shashti rice. Milk decoction with amrita (Tinospora cordifolia).

**Sixth Month:** Gheemedicated with madhura (sweet potency) Ayurvedic medicine. Medicated ghrita with gokshuru or milk decoction of kantakari (Solanum xanthocarpum).

**Seventh Month:** Ghrita medicated with drugs of madhura group or with prathak-paranayadior vidarigandhadi group of Ayurvedic medicines. Milk decoction along with yava (Hordeum vulgare). Sukha prasava ghee is given to pave a way for easy delivery.

**Eighth Month:** Rice gruel prepared with milk and mixed with ghrita. Unctuous gruel and meat soup of wild animals and ashthapan vasti followed by anuvasan basti. Maerua oblongifolia and milk are also given. Dhanwantaram or ksheerabala is also given. This lubricates the reproductive channels in preparation for childbirth.

**Ninth Month:** Anuvasan vasti with oil prepared with madhura Ayurvedic medicines and pichhu dharan (unctuous gruel & meat soup of wild animal). Milk decoction with shatavari (Asparagus racemosus) during this month.
Yogasanas and Pranayama: Yoga And Breathing 
Exercises For Pregnancy

First Trimester: padmasana, vajrasan, gomukhasan, sahaj pranayama, anuloma-viloma, bhramari, and cat stretch pose or marjari asana.

These asanas(yoga poses) strengthen your neck, shoulders, and spine which is why they are also very good for your posture.

In addition, these strengthen your entire reproductive system, and are very beneficial for women before, during and after pregnancy.

Second Trimester: padmasana, vajrasan, gomukhasan followed by shavasan, anuloma–viloma, bhramari, butterfly pose or titali asana

These asanas open up your hips and inner thighs and remove tension from the inner thigh area. In addition, they stretch your knees and pelvic area.

It is one of the most beneficial pregnancy yoga poses and if done consistently right from the first trimester, it will almost certainly ease childbirth to a great extent.

Squats or uttanasana can also be performed and are beneficial during this period.

Third Trimester: padmasan, sukhasan, swastikasan, anuloma–viloma, and bhramari.

Breathing techniques and meditation also help in maintaining good mental health. These are one of the best pregnancy practices or garbhasanskar for expecting mothers.
Benefits Of Yoga And Meditation During Pregnancy

❖ Relieves fluid retention which can be common in the last few months of pregnancy.
❖ Influences the position of the baby and turning it in advance if needed.
❖ Strengthening and massaging the abdomen helps stimulating bowel movements and appetite.
❖ Raises the level of energy and helps in slowing down the metabolism to restore focus.
❖ Helps in reducing morning sickness, nausea and mood swings.
❖ Relieves tension around cervix and birth canal.
❖ Focuses on opening the pelvis to make labor easier and quicker.
❖ It helps in postnatal care as it restores the uterus, abdomen and pelvic floor
❖ Also, it relieves upper back tension and breast discomfort after delivery.

This 9-month long journey is a very crucial period when protective efforts are to be taken for the healthy development of the child.

These pregnancy practices and routines are meant to make this journey as pleasant and wholesome as possible.

Main Highlights Of Garbhasanskar Or Pregnancy Practices

Pregnancy Should Always Be By Choice: Preparing the body well in advance before conceiving will help greatly in having a healthy pregnancy. Even the partner’s health is important for conception to occur as healthy sperms are required for it to happen.
The beginning is by pinda shuddhi or the purification of the gametes (sperm and ovum).

This “supraja janan“, as conceptualized in Ayurveda and involves the preparation of the couple planning pregnancy along with deha–shudhi (purificatory panchkarma therapies) three months prior to conception.

**Mother and Child Bonding:** Mother’s bond with the child starts right from conception. Positive thinking and attitude of both parents promotes the physical wellbeing of the child throughout the pregnancy and after.

**Pregnancy Diet:** Pregnancy is a long period and includes many normal to abnormal feelings and atypical taste developments.

However, at the same time, it is very important for the would-be mother to give the child developing in her womb a balanced diet on a regular basis. For this, Ayurveda has listed month-wise dietary supplements to be taken by would-be mother. (as mentioned above)

**Ayurvedic Medicines:** Certain herbs and medications are mentioned in Ayurvedic medical texts that are advised to be taken during each month of pregnancy.

**Milk decoctions are one of them.** This is taken every day before bed and is prepared by mixing 15 g of the monthly prescribed herbs/200mls milk/800mls water then boil it and reducing it to 1/4th the quantity.

During pregnancy, cramps and sleeplessness are treated with medicated oils like dhanwantharam tailam, sahacharadi tailam, pinda tailam. This ensures proper peripheral circulation.
For having normal delivery medicated ghee like sukhaprasoothi ghrita is given.

**Benefits Of Pregnancy Practices And Routines**

The advantages of garbhasanskar are not only that you impart good qualities to your child but also it develops a deep bond between the mother and the child. In fact, this has a great impact on the health of the mother as well.

**Positive thinking and attitude promote the physical well-being of the mother.**

Even today experts encourage mothers to follow some of the above-mentioned practices of garbhasanskar. They say it may be worthwhile talking to your baby, listening to music and reading them books while you are pregnant.

This will supposedly make your baby have better-sleeping habits, be more alert and confident, more content, more active at birth, better at breastfeeding, and will be able to bond with parents better.

There has been a growing interest in the subject of learning in the womb, which is the underlying concept of the philosophy behind garbhasanskar. Research indicates that a baby’s brain develops up to 60 % while in the womb.

**PANCHAKARMA IN GARBHSANSKAR**

We know that the fetus dwells in uterus of a pregnant woman and has an ability to listen group of commands to which it is subjected.
Ayurveda provides awareness to bring about such an intervention which would help to produce a healthy progeny. This includes use of Ayurvedic Shaman and Panchakarma therapies in order to bring about purification of the bodies of a man and a woman who wish to conceive a healthy baby. This purification or detoxification is necessary as it would help to revitalize the purush beej (sperm) and stree beej (ovum).

In addition to revitalizing these, the Garbha Sambhavsamugri which includes Rutu (Ovulation period / Conception period), Kshetra (Uterus), Ambu (Nutrients), Beej (Ovum) are also cleansed in this process. To initiate Panchakarma following points are takes into consideration:

A) Prakruti of the patient
B) Bala of the Patient
C) Rutu (Season/Kala)
D) Agni
E) Vaya
F) Any pre-existing disease/condition.

Apart from these factors the patient should be properly examined to decide what kind of panchakarma therapy, the patient needs to undergo.

**Importance of Basti –**

While overall study of human body, it can be divided into three parts – wherein each part shows predominance of one of Tridoshas.

A) Portion above chest region – Kapha Predominance.
B) Portion below chest up to umbilicus – Pitta Predominance.
C) Below Umbilicus – Vata Predominance.

As we see, the female reproductive organs are located in vata. Predominant section of the body and Basti being the first choice of
treatment for vata dosha, it becomes indispensable part of Garbha-
Sanskar Treatment.
While describing the importance and properties of Anuvasana basti,
Acharya Charak in Siddhisthan Adhyaya has stated.
There is no other treatment better to control vata dosha other than
basti. Oil or Sneha by its Sneha guna overcomes ‘Ruksha guna of vata,
Guru guna overcomes ‘laghu guna’of vata & Ushana guna overcomes
it’s sheeta guna. It leads to refreshments of senses, increases potency,
strength,complexion and Agni.
While enumerating the importance of Basti Karma an example of tree is
given just as watering roots of tree, yields green leaflets & promotes
Flowering & Fruiting,similarly administering Anuvasana Basti will help
to strengthen a patient & yield a healthy.progeny. Females suffering
from Vatavyadhi, and are unable to conceive & have weakness of
senses, Anuvasana basti is useful in such cases.
While describing the types of basti, 3 types have been narrated –
1) Anuvasana Basti – Involves use of Sneha (Oil or Ghee) to bring about
the Oleation.
2) Niruha Basti – Niruha basti brings about the elimination of Doshas
out of the body.
3) Uttar Basti – The basti which is administered through uttar marga or
urethral or vaginal route is known as Uttar Basti.
Charakacharya in Siddhisthaan adhyaya I has stated following

**Importance of Basti in Garbhadharna**
1) Imparting strength to Shukra
2) Imparting proper Complexion
3) Revitalization of Senses.
Helps in garbha poshana, garbha dahrana.

While describing promotive factor for Conception or Garbhadharana, Charakacharya in Yajja purushya adhyaya of Sutrasthana has stated Saumanasya Garbhadharana Nam Shresthha

Saumanasya – Gratification of senses can be brought about by Basti along with Abhyanga Shirodhara and Abhyantara Snehapana. Proper counselling of patient can bring about Saumanasya.

**Selection of Treatment** –

Basically, Panchakarma therapy for Garbha-Sanskar will include two types of therapies.

**Therapies**
- Sneha Therapy
- Shodhan Therapy

Proper Analyzing the case of patient is to be done before deciding the therapy to be done – Snehana or Shodhana.

**Types of Patients for Garbhasanskar**
- Healthy Individuals(Swastha)
- Diseased Individuals (Vyadhita)

**Role of Panchakarma in Pre-conception stage**

Infertility, PCOS, and ANC PCOS:
Poly cystic ovarian syndrome is a group of complaints having irregular menstrual cycle, unovulatory cycles and weight gain.

This may occur from menarche too.

Early diagnosis will avoid further complications and infertility.

Ayurveda medicines and Panchakarma proved successful curing of PCOS. Makes regular and ovulatory menses and fertility.

Treatment:

Medicinal:

- Toxins digestion, weight loss and increases body strength.
- According to the prakruti means body constitution selection of medicines to increase success rate.
- Proper diet and exercise like yoga, pranayam, cardio is also important.
- Time required is minimum 3 months to 1 year according to patient’s prakruti, strength, regularity in treatment and following advices.

Panchakarma:

- Detoxification and rejuvenation.
- To remove blockages from the system, regain proper functioning of vata and kapha dosha.
- Increases success rate and requires less time to recover.
- It is must to receive for healthy menstrual cycle and ovulation.
- Weight loss is faster.
- Allied thyroid complaints also get cured.
Infertility:

- First for fertility needs regular menstruation, ovulatory cycles, unblocked fallopian tubes, healthy endometrium and uterus.
- Unhealthy life style, food habits lack of exercise, physical and mental stress, early menopause, pcos, anatomical or pathological changes may lead to infertility.
- Ayurvedic medicines successfully cure all complaints without any complications to healthy fertility.
- Panchakarma is having boosting to cure and faster recovery and results for healthy ovum and sperms and finally the baby.
- Along with regular medicines and timely panchakarma, best life style and food habits and daily exercise is also very important.
- Unexplained infertility also gets results with Ayurveda.
- Mainly Virechana is the best shodhana karma for these Stree rog or syndrome as Pitta is mainly involved.
- Unexplained infertility where Vata is vitiated with Pitta.