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# Sutika Paricharya - Post Natal Care in Ayurveda

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda give importance for the care of mother at every phase of her life specially when it comes to antenatal care and postnatal care. A postnatal period beginning immediately after the separation of placenta and extending up to 6 weeks, otherwise called as puerperium or puerperal period. Postnatal care certainly co-related with *Sutika Paricharya* explained in Ayurvedic classics. *Garbhini* and *Sutika Paricharya* are well described by our Ancient Ayurvedic scholars in their respective *Samhitas*. They have described dietary regimen, living style, and other required management for whole pregnancy and up to 6 month after delivery. In this stage mother should be educated to take care of herself and the new born baby. This period is of happiness and contentment, on one hand and physical and mental fatigue due to delivery, on the other hand, she become weak or emaciated after loss of blood and body fluid during delivery. *Garbhini* is much prone to the disease due to aggravation of *Doshas*. This further may be aggravated during delivery and puerperium due to loss of blood and other important *Dhatu*s of body. Therefore she needs special and proper care during pregnancy as well as during puerperium. The regimen that helps the woman to regain her lost vitality and helps her body to revert back to prepregnant state is called *Sutika Paricharya*, as during this period she restores her health and strength.

**Key words:** *Sutika Paricharya, Garbhini, Postnatal care, Puerperium.*

## INTRODUCTION

As per modern medical science the puerperium is the period following child birth during which the body tissues especially the pelvic organ revert back to the pre pregnant state both anatomically and physiologically.<sup>[1]</sup>

Ayurveda has always given importance to care the *Stree* (female) at every phase of life in respect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* (menstrual care), *Garbhini*

*Paricharya* (Antenatal care) and *Sutika Paricharya* (post natal care). In Ayurveda, the term *Sutika* (puerperial women) can be used only after expulsion of placenta.<sup>[2]</sup> *Mithyaachar* (inappropriate physical and mental behavior) in this period definitely results in incurable disease.<sup>[3]</sup> It is said in Ayurveda about 74 types of diseases can happen in this period if not managed properly. Due to development of fetus, instability of body tissues, exertion of labour pains and excretions of moisture and blood, the woman becomes very weak. After following proper puerperial care woman regain all the lost things and reaches pre pregnancy status.<sup>[4]</sup>

### *Sutika Paricharya*

The postnatal 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 believes that it lasts until the re-establishment of menstrual cycle. Ayurveda classics has described management of *Sutika*, but *Kashyapa* has described in

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detail about it. *Sutika Kala* (duration of puerperium / post natal phase) mentioned by various Ayurvedic classics can be tabulated as follows.

**Table 1: Sutika Kala (duration of post natal phase)**

Ayurvedic classic text	Sutika Kala (duration of post natal period)
<i>Sushruta Samhita</i>	Following 1½ month of regulated specific dietetics and mode of life of the woman becomes free from the epithet of <i>Sutika</i> and have cited the opinion of others that the women should be called <i>Sutika</i> till she does not restart her menstrual cycle. <sup>[5]</sup>
<i>Astanga Hridaya</i>	Same as <i>Sushruta Samhita</i> i.e 1½ month <sup>[6]</sup>
<i>Kashyapa Samhita</i>	Six months <sup>[7]</sup>
<i>Yoga Ratnakar</i>	Special dietetic management for 1 month <sup>[8]</sup>
<i>Bhavprakash</i>	In addition agreeing explanation of <i>Sushruta</i> (i.e. 1½ month), he has cited that following subsidence of complication and aggravation of <i>Doshas</i> , the woman should give up specific mode of life following four months. <sup>[9]</sup>

Following delivery, *Ahara Rasa* reaches the breast and forms milk, remaining *Rasa* getting transformed into the blood circulating in the whole body reaches to reproductive system. Following achievement of refill of *Dhatus* and steadiness of body, the blood gathered in uterus is discharged cyclically.<sup>[10]</sup>

*Sutika Paricharya* includes mainly three parts *Ahara* (Diet), *Vihar* (Lifestyle) and *Aushadhi* (Post natal visit and medicines). As per medical science has advised post natal examination i.e. twice daily for first three days and subsequently once a day till the umbilical cord drops off. At each examination should see about temperature, pulse, respiration and breast examination, progress of normal involution of uterus, examination of lochia for the abnormality, check urine

and bowels and advise on perineal toileting including stitches if any. Next visit at 6 weeks to see the involution of uterus and should complete by then and there after once 2 or 3 month till end of one year.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Table 2: Showing Ahara, Vihara and Aushadhi Kalpana for Sutika**

Text	Ahara Kalpana (diet)	Vihara (mode of life)	Aushadhi (medicines)
<b>Charaka Samhita</b>	Liquid gruel of rice medicated with <i>Pippali</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> ), <i>Pippalimula</i> ( <i>piper longum's root</i> ), <i>Chavya</i> ( <i>piper retrofractum</i> ), <i>Chitraka</i> ( <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> ), <i>Shunthi</i> ( <i>zinziber officinale</i> ) for 5 -7 days. Use of <i>Brihagana</i> drugs from 6 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> day. <sup>[12]</sup>	<i>Abhayanga</i> of abdomen with <i>Taila</i> or <i>Grita</i> then <i>Udarveshtana</i> with big clean cloth. Irrigation or bath with luke warm water. <sup>[12]</sup>	<i>Sarpi</i> , <i>Taila</i> , <i>Vasa</i> or <i>Majja</i> with <i>Pippali</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> ), <i>Pippalimula</i> ( <i>piper longum's root</i> ), <i>Chavya</i> ( <i>piper retrofractum</i> ), <i>Chitraka</i> ( <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> ), <i>Shrinagvera</i> ( <i>zinziber officinale</i> ) <i>Churna</i> . <i>Anupana-Ushna Jala</i> for 5 or 7 nights. <sup>[12]</sup>
<b>Sushrut Samhita</b>	<i>Sneha</i> <i>Yavagu</i> or <i>Kshara</i> <i>Yavagu</i> saturated with drugs of <i>Vidarigandhadi</i> ( <i>Desmodium gangetium</i> etc.) <i>Gana</i> from 3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> or 7 <sup>th</sup> days. Meat soup of wild	<i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Bala</i> ( <i>Sida cardifolia</i> ) <i>Taila</i> , then irrigation with decoction of <i>Bhadradaru</i> ( <i>Cedrus deodara</i> ) etc. drugs capable of suppressing	<i>Pippali</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> ), <i>Pippalimula</i> ( <i>piper longum's root</i> ), <i>Chavya</i> ( <i>piper retrofractum</i> ), <i>Chitraka</i> ( <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> ), <i>Hastipippali</i> and <i>Shrinagvera</i> ( <i>zinziber</i>

	animal saturated with <i>Yava</i> ( <i>Vulgaris sativus</i> ), <i>Kola</i> ( <i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> ), <i>Kulattha</i> ( <i>Doolichos biflours</i> ) with cooked <i>Shali</i> rice from 7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> day of <i>Sutika Kala</i> . <sup>[13]</sup>	the <i>Vata</i> . <sup>[13]</sup>	<i>officinale</i> ) <i>Churna</i> . <i>Anupana</i> - <i>Ushna Gudodaka</i> (warm jaggery water) for 2 or 3 days. <sup>[13]</sup>	<i>longum</i> , <i>piper longum's</i> root, <i>piper retrofractum</i> , <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> , <i>zingiber officinale</i> ) <i>Siddha Peya</i> for first 3 days. <i>Vidaryadi Gana</i> ( <i>Pueraria tuberosa</i> etc.) <i>Kwatha Siddha Snehayukta Yavagu</i> or <i>Kshira Yavagu</i> from 4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> day, after that gradually <i>Brimhana</i> diet from 8 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> day, meat soup should be used. <sup>[15]</sup>	description as <i>Ashtanga Sangraha</i> . There is also description of massage of <i>Yoni</i> along with body. <sup>[15]</sup>	<i>Panchakola</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> , <i>piper longum's</i> root, <i>piper retrofractum</i> , <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> , <i>zinziber officinale</i> ) <i>Churna</i> . <i>Anupana</i> - <i>Ushna Gudodaka</i> (warm jaggery water) for 2 or 3 days. <sup>[15]</sup>	
<b>Astanga Sangrah</b>	Liquid <i>Yavagu</i> prepared with either milk or <i>Vidaryadi Gana</i> ( <i>Pueraria tuberosa</i> etc.) drugs for 3, 5 or 7 days. Light diet with soup of <i>Yava</i> ( <i>Vulgaris sativus</i> ), <i>Kola</i> ( <i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> ), <i>Kulattha</i> ( <i>Doolichos biflours</i> ) from 4 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> day to 12 <sup>th</sup> day. Meat soup of wild animals, agreeable diet from 13 <sup>th</sup> to <i>Sutika Kala</i> . <sup>[14]</sup>	<i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Bala</i> ( <i>Sida cardifolia</i> ) <i>Taila</i> , <i>Udarveshtana</i> after massage of abdomen with <i>Taila</i> or <i>Ghrita</i> . Irrigation with luke warm water. Massage unguent irrigation and bathing with <i>Jivaniya</i> and <i>Brimhaniya</i> , <i>Madhur</i> and <i>Vatahara</i> drugs. <sup>[14]</sup>	<i>Sneha</i> with <i>Panchakola</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> , <i>piper longum's</i> root, <i>piper retrofractum</i> , <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> , <i>zinziber officinale</i> ) <i>Churna</i> or <i>Sneha</i> with <i>Yawani</i> ( <i>Trachyspermum ammi</i> ), <i>Upakunchika</i> ( <i>Nigella sativa</i> ) <i>Chavya</i> ( <i>piper retrofractum</i> ), <i>Chitraka</i> ( <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> ), <i>Vyosh</i> ( <i>Zingiber officinale</i> , <i>Piper nigrum</i> , <i>Piper longum</i> ) and <i>Saindhava Anupana</i> - <i>Ushna Jala</i> for 7 nights. <sup>[14]</sup>	<b>Kashyap Samhita</b>	<i>Pippali</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> ), <i>Nagar</i> ( <i>zinziber officinale</i> ) <i>Yukta</i> and <i>Saindhavarahita Alpasneha Yukta Yavagu</i> for first 3 or 5 days, then <i>Sasnehalavana Yavagu</i> , then <i>Sasneha-Lavana Amla Yukta Kullatha</i> ( <i>Dolichos biflorus</i> )	Massage of back, pressure of abdomen and flanks, then <i>Udarveshtana</i> . Sitting over a small chair covered with leather bag filled with hot <i>Bala</i> ( <i>Sida cardifolia</i> ) <i>Taila</i> , then sudation in the <i>Yoni</i> with oleo prepared	<i>Snehapana</i> acc. to <i>Satmya</i> . <i>Anupana</i> - <i>Manda</i> for 3 or 5 days. <sup>[16]</sup>
<b>Astanga Hridaya</b>	<i>Panchakola</i> ( <i>piper</i>	Almost similar	<i>Taila</i> or <i>Ghrita</i> with				

	Yusha with meat soup of wild animals and <i>Ghritabrishta Kushamand</i> ( <i>Benincasa hispida</i> ) and <i>Moolaka</i> ( <i>Raphanus sativus</i> ). <sup>[16]</sup>	with <i>Priyangu</i> ( <i>Callicarpa macrophylla</i> ) etc. hot water bath after proper sudation, fumigation, with <i>Kushtha</i> ( <i>Saussurea lappa</i> ), <i>Guggulu</i> ( <i>Commiphora mukul</i> ) and <i>Agaru</i> ( <i>Aquilaria agallocha</i> ) mixed with <i>Gritha</i> . <sup>[16]</sup>	
<b>Harita Samhita</b>	<i>Ushna Kulattha</i> ( <i>Dolichos biflorus</i> ) Yush on 2 <sup>nd</sup> day, <i>Panchakola</i> ( <i>piper longum</i> , <i>piper longum's</i> root, <i>piper retrofractum</i> , <i>plumbago zeylanica</i> , <i>zingiber officinale</i> ) Yavagu on 3 <sup>rd</sup> day, <i>Chaturjatak</i> ( <i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> , <i>Elettaria cardmomum</i> , leaves of <i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> , <i>Mesua ferrea</i> ) mixed Yavagu	Vaginal filling with oil and massage followed by sudation with hot water. <sup>[17]</sup>	Decoction of available drugs out of <i>Lodhra</i> ( <i>Symplocos racemosa</i> ), <i>Arjuna</i> ( <i>Terminalia arjuna</i> ), <i>Kadamba</i> ( <i>Anthocephalus indicus</i> ), <i>Devadaru</i> ( <i>Cedrus deodara</i> ), <i>Beejaka</i> ( <i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> ) and <i>Karkandu</i> (a variety of <i>ziziphus mauritiana</i> ). Then <i>Nagara</i> ( <i>zingiber officinale</i> ) and <i>Haritaki</i> ( <i>terminalia chebula</i> ) <i>Churna</i> with

	on 4 <sup>th</sup> day, cooked rice of <i>Shali</i> or <i>Shastika</i> on 5 <sup>th</sup> day. <sup>[17]</sup>		jaggery on 2 <sup>nd</sup> day morning. <sup>[17]</sup>
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### Amulet for *Sutika* (Puerperal Women)

The puerperal woman should tie amulet of *Trivrita* (*Operculina turpethun*) over her head.<sup>[18]</sup>

Puerperal management according to the sex of child: oil should be given for drinking to *Sutika* in case of delivery of male child and *Ghrita* in case of female child.<sup>[19]</sup>

### *Pathya* and *Apathya* for *Sutika* <sup>[20]</sup>

#### *Pathya*

1. *Sutika* should have bath with much quantity of warm water.
2. Boiled water should be taken for drinking purpose.
3. *Parisheka*, *Avagahana* etc. are always with luke warm water.
4. She should do *Udarveshtana*.
5. *Snehana* and *Swedana* must be done everyday as per *Desha*, *Kala* etc.
6. *Kashyapa* has given the special indication of *Madana* for *Sutika*.

#### *Apathya*

1. Physical and mental stress, anger etc.
2. Cold water, cold wine and cold things.
3. The sexual intercourse.
4. There is contraindication of *Panchakarma* for *Sutika*.
  - (a) Due to administration of *Asthapana Basti*, the *Amadosha* of *Sutika* would be increased.<sup>[21]</sup>
  - (b) Due to *Nasya Karma*, emaciation, anorexia, body ache would be created in *Sutika*.<sup>[22]</sup>

### Benefits of *Sutika Paricharya*

It can be concluded that the *Sutika* who is weak due to development of foetus, loss of *Dhatu*s, excretion of *Kleda*, blood and exhaustion due to labour pain can regain her pre-pregnancy state by following this *Paricharya*.<sup>[23]</sup> We can summarize post natal care in Ayurveda as follows,

1. Strengthen and improves digestion power.
2. Tones muscles, calms nerves and greases all joints.
3. Increase psychological alertness, apparent thinking and emotional steadiness.
4. Helps woman's body reserve into her normal shape.
5. Effortless lactation and more restful feeding.

### DISCUSSION

The speciality of giving birth to a child made a woman usually for her creative point of view in the life. In *Sutika Kala*, proper *Sutika Paricharya* cause complete involution of uterus and other pelvic organ, so that they reach to their pre pregnant state. Aim of puerperium is to maintain maternal and infant health preventing any complication and to establish infant feeding. *Abhayanga* have been described in all most all of Ayurvedic classics. *Abhayanga* causes toning up of muscles of pelvic floor, abdomen, back and vagina. Ayurveda advocates *Bala* oil (*Sida cardifolia*), *Dasmoola* oil, *sesamum* oil for *Abhayanga* during postnatal period. *Abhyanga* can prevent the thrombosis because rubbing and friction during massage dilate superficial blood vessel and thus improves venous blood flow. Vaginal massage facilitates proper drainage of *Lochia* i.e. vaginal secretion, pacifies *Apana Vata* and tones up vagina.<sup>[24]</sup> *Swedana* for *Sutika* has been described by Acharya Sushruta, Kashyapa, Harita and Yogaratnakar. Since *Swedana* is having the property of *Vatashamana*, hence it is beneficial during *Sutika Kala* where *Vata* is vitiated. In general all the texts have advised massage, oral administration of fat with drugs and decoction for 3-7 days after delivery.<sup>[25]</sup>

### CONCLUSION

As *Sutika Kala* is a critical period for women, it needs a proper management and care with specific diet, mode of life and *Aushadi*. In *Sutika Kala* there is vitiation of *Vata*, therefore it is most advisable to take *Vata Shamaka* drugs. During *Sutika Kala*, woman needs a special management and care for proper and healthy growth of new born baby as well as for maintenance of her own health.

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