



## A comprehensive review of ayurvedic management of 'gerd (gastrointestinal reflux diseases) in pregnancy' w.s.r to *urdhwaga amalapitta*.

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### ABSTRACT :

Pregnancy is characterized by various physiological changes that may lead frequent gastrointestinal complaints, such as heartburn, nausea and vomiting, or constipation. Like nausea and vomiting, regurgitation and heartburn is also common complaint which can affect throughout pregnancy mostly in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester. Along with physiological changes in pregnancy, wrong Lifestyle habits like eating too late at night, spicy food, alcohol, smoking, coffee, tea, cause GERD (Gastrophageal reflux diseases) in pregnancy. GERD correlated with the disease *Urdhwaga Amlapitta*, described in ayurveda. Gastrointestinal reflux diseases require treatment maintenance during pregnancy period as it can affect day to day life, food intake and so on can hamper baby growth. Till date there is no satisfactory treatment is available for GERD in pregnancy. In the present article an

attempt has been made to emphasis on dietary management and herbal treatment options for GERD in pregnancy.

**Keywords:** Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), GERD in pregnancy, Heartburn in pregnancy, Urdhwaga Amlapitta, Ayurveda.

## INTRODUCTION :

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a common gastrointestinal disorder that develops when regurgitation of gastric contents into the esophagus. Symptoms of gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD) in pregnancy are reported with a prevalence of 30–80%.<sup>1-4</sup> GERD symptoms are common during pregnancy.<sup>2</sup> GERD can manifest as heartburn, regurgitation, epigastric pain, dyspepsia, nausea, bloating, belching, chronic cough, asthma, laryngitis and dental erosions etc. Heartburn and regurgitation are the most frequent symptoms in pregnancy.

The symptoms of heartburn during pregnancy do not differ from the classical presentation in the general adult population. Heartburn is the predominate symptom and worsens as pregnancy advances. Regurgitation occurs in about the same frequency as heartburn.<sup>1-5</sup> The majority of pregnant GERD sufferers report exacerbation of symptoms after eating and at bedtime.<sup>6-7</sup>

Complications such as erosive esophagitis, bleeding or strictures are rarely described.<sup>8</sup>

This condition can be co-related with '*Urdhwaga Amlapitta*' described in Ayurveda text.

The challenge of treatment during pregnancy is the potential teratogenicity of common antireflux medications. Till date there is no satisfactory treatment is available for GERD in pregnancy by any medical system, so there is need to find out drugs which are not teratogenic but can control GERD. With Lifestyle modifications and dietary changes, some herbal drugs and formulations will be beneficial which are mentioned in ayurvedic literature under *Amlapitta* disease treatment.

Herein, we have a comprehensive review of the most common gastrointestinal disorder of pregnancy, providing a guide for the gynecologist that may be helpful in the diagnosis, approach to these situations and management by ayurvedic treatment and dietary changes.

## Pathophysiology of Gastroesophageal reflux disease in pregnancy :

### According to Modern Science :

Elevated levels of hormones, such as progesterone, contribute to delayed gastric emptying. Gastric acidity is increased because of the higher production of gastrin by the placenta<sup>9</sup>. This is most acceptable theory for increased risk GERD in pregnancy.

### According to Ayurveda :

GERD in Pregnancy is not explained directly by any Ayurvedic literature, so we can not get a pathophysiology of the same. But a Disease named 'Urdhwaga Amlapitta' which can also occurs in pregnancy, we can compare with the GERD in Pregnancy due to similarity in symptoms.

Role of Agni and Paachak pitta in pathogenesis of GERD:

In Ayurveda, it is believed that *Agnimandya* (indigestion) is the root cause of all the diseases.<sup>10</sup> In Ayurveda, when *pitta dosha* increases abnormally in body it moves in upward direction or downward, so the *Amlapitta* disorder is of two types as *Adhoga* and *Urdhwaga Amlapitta*. If this *pitta* takes an upward course it shows symptoms like vomiting, burning in chest, headache, loss of appetite then it is called *Urdhwaga Amlapitta*. *Urdhwaga Amlapitta* includes different symptoms like *Aruchi* (anorexia), *Gurukoshthatva* (heaviness in abdomen) *Gaurav* (Lethargy), *Vibandh* (Constipation), *Shiroruja* (Headache), *Utklesh* (Nausea), *Tiktamlodgar* (acid eructation).<sup>11-12</sup> These symptoms are same as Heartburn and regurgitation which are included in GERD.

According to Acharya Vagabhat, *Pachak Pitta* (Gastric juice) acts as Agni (Appetite). When its liquid form is lost, this Agni is important in *Annapachan Prakriya* (Digestion). So this *Pachak pitta* (Gastric juice) is correlated to HCL & *Amlapitta* is condition where *Pachak Pitta* (Gastric juice) is increased in quantity.

### Ayurvedic Management Of GERD in Pregnancy :

Treatment algorithms suggest stepwise progression of options, starting with lifestyle modifications (e.g. eat smaller and more frequent meals, avoid eating near bedtime, elevate the head of the bed) and trying pharmacologic therapy if symptoms are not adequately managed by lifestyle changes.

There are some herbs and herbal formulations which can relieve symptoms of GERD in pregnancy without harming baby and having health benefits for growth of Baby.

1. *Avipattikar churn* – It is an acid neutralizer, mild laxative and also increases digestive fires. Can be used in pregnancy in lower doses and only in patients having complaints of chronic constipation with GERD.
2. *Shankh Bhasma* – It is calcium carbonate which has acid-neutralizing property in tablet format as assessed by Rosette Rice test.<sup>14</sup>
3. *Kamdudha rasa* - herbal-mineral ayurvedic classical medicine. It is beneficial in digestive ailments, chronic fever, debility after fever or chronic disease, burning sensation, vertigo, nausea, vomiting etc. It is considered a potent antacid.<sup>15</sup>
4. *Laghusutshekhara Rasa* - *Laghu Sutshekhara Ras* is a herbal-mineral ayurvedic classical medicine provides relief from GI symptoms including nausea, vomiting, heartburn and abdominal pain. In low dose it can be used in pregnancy.<sup>16</sup>
5. *Khand kushmand Avaleha* : It is a herbal formulation made from fruits of *Kushmand* (*Benincasa hispida*) and *Amalaki* (*Embllica officinalis*).<sup>17</sup>

Herb which can be used for GERD in Pregnancy :

1. *Yashtimadhu* - We can use it as a *choorn* (Powder) or its ghee preparation. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn. – It is an antacid, antiemetic and mild laxative.<sup>18-19</sup>

2. *Shatavari* - We can use it as a *choorn* (Powder) or its ghee preparation. *Asparagus racemosus* - Enhances digestion, Astringent and health tonic.<sup>20-21</sup>
3. *Draksha* - *Vitis vinifera* Linn.- useful in thirst, chest burning.<sup>22-23</sup>

Eating the correct eating regimen can control indigestion or GERD issue.

Light food, coconut water, food having cooling properties.

Vegetables like white pumpkin, bitter gourd, matured ash gourd, leafy vegetables except methi. Wheat, old rice, barley, green gram, sugar candy, cucumber

Fruits like gooseberry, dry grapes, black grapes, sweet lime, pomegranate, fig, dry fig. Take adequate amount of fluids like pomegranate juice, lemon juice, *amla* juice, sweetlime juice, medicated water with *ushira* grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides*) or coriander seeds, or *laja* (puffed rice) lukewarm water *Dadimpak* (sweet preparation made of pomegranate) *Moramla* (jam made from *amla*), *gulkand* (jam made from rose petals) with milk A cup of lukewarm milk after every two or three hours One teaspoonful of ghee with warm milk

Take adequate sleep & rest

Practice *Yoga*, *Pranayam*, and meditation

#### Restrictions :

1. Avoid excessive spicy, sour and salty substances
2. Avoid fried and junk food items
3. Do not remain hungry. Avoid fast.
4. Do not overeat, take small frequent meals
5. Avoid untimely and irregular food habit
6. Avoid foods containing excess amount of garlic, salt, oil, chillies, etc.
7. Avoid rice, curd and sour fruits.
8. Avoid lying down immediately after food and in supine position. The best recommended position is left lateral Avoid smoking, alcohol, tea, coffee and aspirin type drugs.
9. Avoid stress.

The month wise *Garbhini Paricharya* (Month wise Dietary Regimen) described in *Ayurveda* help in proper growth and development of fetus and give health and care to mother. To maintain health of pregnant women *garbhini paricharya* is most important. Following Monthly diet regimen will help to keep GI system proper functioning and will avoid symptoms of GERD<sup>24-26</sup>.

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