



"Life style modification in Infertility: A Comprehensive Review"

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Abstract : Infertility remains a significant concern globally, impacting physical, social, and emotional well-being. Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, offers holistic approaches to address infertility by emphasizing lifestyle modifications, known as Vihara. These practices aim to restore balance in the body, mind, and spirit, thus enhancing fertility. This review explores the role of Ayurvedic Vihara practices in infertility management, highlighting their potential benefits and mechanisms of action. A comprehensive search was conducted to identify relevant literature on Ayurvedic Vihara practices and infertility. Articles, books, and traditional Ayurvedic texts were reviewed to extract information on recommended Vihara practices for fertility enhancement. Key Vihara practices identified include dietary recommendations, daily routines (Dinacharya), seasonal routines (Ritucharya), yoga, and stress management techniques.

key words: Ayurveda, infertility, Vihara practices, lifestyle modifications, holistic approach, fertility enhancement, herbal remedies, yoga, stress management

INTRODUCTION

¹Infertility remains a significant concern globally, impacting physical, social, and emotional well-being. Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, offers holistic approaches to address infertility by emphasizing lifestyle modifications, known as Vihara. Lifestyle changes can play a crucial role in improving fertility and managing infertility. While medical interventions are often necessary, adopting a healthier lifestyle can complement treatments and significantly enhance reproductive health. For both men and women, maintaining a balanced diet is key. Consuming nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can help regulate hormones and improve reproductive function. Omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, and folic acid are particularly beneficial in promoting fertility. Physical activity is another essential aspect, with moderate exercise improving blood circulation, hormonal balance, and overall health. However, excessive exercise or extreme weight fluctuations can negatively impact fertility, so finding a balance is important. Managing stress is equally vital, as chronic stress can disrupt hormone production and affect ovulation in women, as well as sperm count in men. Stress-reducing activities such as yoga, meditation, and mindfulness practices can support better reproductive outcomes. Quality sleep also plays a significant role; lack of adequate rest can interfere with hormone regulation, making it harder to conceive.

GIVE UP SMOKING.

- Smoking can cause problems for virtually all areas of the reproductive system.
- Women who smoke are more likely to have difficulty conceiving, may not respond as well to infertility treatments and are at increased risk of miscarriage, complications during the birth, and of having a baby with a low birth weight.
- For men, smoking may affect the development and quality of sperm, decrease the sperm count and reduce the volume of semen. In addition, there is a higher risk of impotence (erectile dysfunction).

RESTRICT ALCOHOL INTAKE.

As drinking excessive amounts of alcohol may affect sperm count and increase the risk for miscarriage and birth defects, it is recommended that males take a conservative approach to alcohol and that females abstain from drinking alcohol while trying to become pregnant

SAY NO TO DRUGS.

Illegal drugs such as cocaine and marijuana have been known to disrupt the menstrual cycle and ovulation process. Marijuana can also affect sperm count.

WELL-BALANCED DIET.

There is no special eating plan for becoming pregnant. A sensible diet that includes plenty of fruit, vegetables, grains, meat, poultry and seafood is advised

EXERCISE WITH CAUTION.

Exercising heavily every day may interfere with the regularity of the menstrual cycle.

For men, prolonged cycling can cause damage to the groin and there is also the risk of damage to the testicles from contact sport

CUT BACK ON CAFFEINE.

Caffeine may interfere with the natural ovulation process and even a modest amount of coffee (one or two cups daily) may decrease fertility and affect sperm count.

MIND YOUR WEIGHT.

- For both men and women, being overweight can cause fertility problems, especially if your weight is influenced by another condition such as diabetes, for women, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).
- For women, a body fat level just 10–15% above or below women diagnosed with infertility related to being overweight or underweight conceive spontaneously when their weight normalizes.
- Dieting while you are trying to become pregnant may throw out your body's natural balance so it is best to embark on a weight loss program before you start trying to conceive.

For overweight men, losing weight may help increase your sperm count.

AVOID USING LUBRICANTS.

They often contain chemicals that can damage or kill sperm.

AVOID TOXINS.

Jobs involving heavy metals, such as lead or mercury, chemicals in pesticides, or chemicals used in certain manufacturing processes (such as painting or printing) may be harmful to male fertility and damage sperm.

LIFESTYLE ADVICE FOR WOMEN

- Increase your intake of folic acid.
- Increasing your intake of folic acid (known as folate in its natural form) before conceiving and for the first three months of pregnancy can reduce the risk of having a baby with neural tube defects, such as spina bifida.
- Folic acid is readily available in tablet form from pharmacies (at least 0.4–0.5 mg of folic acid each day) or you can eat more folate-rich foods such as green leafy vegetables (spinach, broccoli), oranges, bananas, avocado, berries and eggs.
- Many foods, such as cereals and bread have added folic acid

LIFESTYLE ADVICE FOR MEN KEEP THEM COOL.

- Raising the temperature of the testicles can decrease sperm production and motility (the quality of movement).
- Testicles need to be at a slightly lower temperature than the rest of the body to maximize sperm production, so opt for boxers rather than briefs and avoid extremely hot baths, showers
- **Daily Regimen (Dinacharya) Night Regimen (Nisha charya) Seasonal Regimen (Ritucharya)**
- दिनचर्या निशाचर्या ऋतुचर्या यथोदिता। आचरन् पुरुषः स्वस्थः सदा तिष्ठति नान्यथा² II Bhavaprakasha 5/1
- रोगाः सर्वेपि जायन्ते वेगोदीरण धारणैः³ II Ashtanga Hridara, Sutra Sthana

Non-suppression of natural urges

SNANA- BATHING

दीपनं वृष्यमायुष्यं स्नानं ऊर्जा बलप्रदम् । कण्डु मल श्रम स्वेद तन्द्रा तृद दाह पाप्मजित्⁴ II A.s.sutra.3/69

Bathing improves digestion, acts as aphrodisiac, prolongs life, increases enthusiasm and strength. It helps to get rid of dirt, waste products, sweat, tiredness, excessive thirst, burning sensation and microbes.

- Practice of sexual intercourse according to seasons

सेवेत क्रमतः कामं बलाद्वाजीकृतौ हिमे। प्रकामं तु निषेवेत मैथुनं शिशिरागमे।। (भा.प्र. 3//275)⁵

Person should take drugs enhancing virility & practice sexual intercourse in Hemanta rtu.

During śīśira rtu without using aphrodisiac one can do sexual intercourse according to his will.

ह्यहद्वसन्तशरदोः पक्षादृष्टिनिदाघयोः । सेवेत कामतः कामः हेमन्ते शिशिरे बली।।⁶ (अ.स.सू.९/७५)

During Vasanta & sarad rtu, it should be done once in 3 days. in varsa & grīṣma ṛtu it should be done once in 15 days. During hemanta & śīśira rtu one should do according to his desire.

According to the opinion of Suśruta, one should practice sexual intercourse once in 3 days in all seasons except grīṣma, when it will be once in 15 days. Time for sexual intercourse.

- ⁷Ācārya Caraka has clearly mentioned various postures during cohabitation and their impact as follows :
- **Prone: Vāta** aggravates and afflicts the uterus.
- **Right side: Kapha** is displaced and blocks the uterus (yoni).

- **Left side: Pitta** burns the gametes.

Use of apadravyās (artificial objects made of iron etc.) for sexual gratification causes ulceration excoriation, hyperemia, infection etc. Like western countries, India has become a fast food nation, our age old healthy diet and regimen is fast succumbing to unhealthy/sedentary life style giving rise to a new set of so called **life style disorders like DM, PCOS, obesity, infertility etc.**

Place for sexual intercourse

- विहारं भार्यया कुर्यात् देशोतिशयसंवृते। रम्ये आव्याङ्गनागाने सुगन्धे सुखमारुते॥⁸ (भा.प्र.५/२८०)
- देशे गुरुजनासत्रे विवृतेऽतित्रपाकरे । श्रूयमाणे व्यथाहेतुवचने न रमेत ना ॥⁹(भा.प्र.५/२८१)
- One should indulge in sexual intercourse with his wife in private secrete place which is beautiful, sweet smelling, where melodious music is heard & pleasant wind is blowing in.
- But the place should not be near the residence of teachers, too open which may cause shyness & allows sound of discomfort to exterior.

TABLE NO: 1 HARMFUL EFFECTS OF INTERCOURSE IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS

| Sexual intercourse with | Harmful effects |
|---|--|
| 1.Menstruating lady | Vision defects, lifespan decreases, loss of lusture |
| 2.Saint (sanyasi) wife of teacher, belonging to same lineage (gotra), elderly lady, during fullmoon day or new moon day | Life span will be reduced. |
| 3.Pregnant lady ,Lady suffering from disease | Life span will be reduced. Cause discomfort to foetus |
| 4. Defective organs, wearing dirty cloths, hatred towards men, weak & infertile lady. | Potency will be reduced. Depression may occur |
| 6.Sexual intercourse in diseased condition or during morning time or at midnight | Leads to body ache, splenomegaly, unconsciousness death & aggravation of vata & pitta. |
| 7.Sexual indulgence in other routes (Tiryak yoni) like other animals, anal, vātādi vitiated yoni | Leads to upadamśa, aggravation of vāyu, depletion of śukra. |
| 8.Sexual indulgence during urge of micturition. | śukrāśmari |

PREPARATIONS PRIOR TO SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

- स्नातचन्दनलिप्ताङ्गः सुगन्ध सुमनोऽन्वितः । भुक्तवृष्यः सुवसनः सुवेषः स मलंकृतः ॥ ताम्बूलवदनः पल्यामनुरक्तोऽधिकस्मरः। पुत्रार्थी पुरुषो नारीमुपेयच्छयने शुभे॥ (भा.प्र.५/२८२-२८३)¹¹

The man desirous of having son should take bath, apply paste of sandal wood for sweet smell, take aphrodisiac, wear good cloth & good appearance, after chewing betel leaves, having love towards his wife should go to beautiful bed with pleasant mind & indulge in sexual intercourse.

YOGA

- While yoga does not guarantee conception, it can improve fertility rate and chances of conceiving. Yoga asanas help develops a hospitable body and calm mind, thus preparing one for childbirth.
- When one gets bogged down with infertility issues, yoga boosts the spirits and encourages a positive outlook.

PRANAYAMAS TO BOOST FERTILITY

- These pranayamas or breathing techniques can induce a calm state of mind and body.
- Recommended This greatly increases your chances of conception.
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CONCLUSION

- Various lifestyle factors and daily exposures can negatively affect human spermatogenesis, particularly through oxidative stress. However, lifestyle alterations can partially or entirely mitigate these detrimental impacts. For example, adopting a healthy diet, engaging in physical exercise, ceasing harmful addictions, and improving circadian rhythms through regular sleep contribute to positive changes that counteract poor lifestyle choices.

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