

ISSN 0973-2764



THE UNIVERSITY OF TRANS-DISCIPLINARY
HEALTH SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY

Vol 17 Issue 4 2021 Rs. 100

Heritage Amruth

A Magazine For Healthy Living, The Natural Way

INFERTILITY





SOURCE OF LIFE

Amruth is a sanskrit word meaning 'immortal', local name for *Tinospora cordifolia*, a plant used in India for its rejuvenating properties

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Published and printed by Darshan Shankar
on behalf of Medplan Conservatory Society

74/2, Jarakabande Kaval
Attur PO via Yelahanka
Bengaluru 560 064, India

PRINTED AT Shreenidhi Graphics
14, 3rd Cross
Nagappa Street, P.G. Halli
Bengaluru 560 003
Ph.: + 91 9844532839

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ENQUIRIES ABOUT SUBSCRIPTION & SALES: 91 9342159897
LAND LINE: 080-2856 8873
ENQUIRIES ABOUT THE CONTENTS: 9844034023

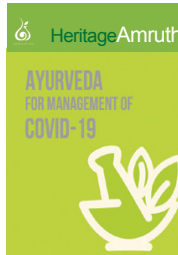
Heritage Amruth is not a magazine or an organization. It believes that there is a design, purpose and use in every element of nature. It believes that there is science underlying most of our health traditions. It believes that we should build upon wisdom, not forget it. That we should live in harmony with nature, not fight it. It believes that every plant, every animal, every human being is a miracle. It believes in life.

A PREVIEW TO OUR FORTHCOMING ISSUES

OCTOBER 2021

COVID AND POST COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global health crisis posing an unprecedented public health emergency. Effective management to address this infection is still evolving and attempts are being made to integrate traditional interventions along with standard of care. Ayurveda and Yoga can certainly play a pivotal role to augment preventive measures.



FEBRUARY 2022

BACK PAIN

Extended hours of sedentary work, without any physical activity, is more than enough to offer an array of back pain problems, with each of them having a different twist to the spine. Explore this issue for the natural and effective cures for the pain in your back....



JUNE 2022

OBESITY AND WEIGHT LOSS

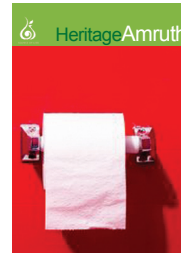
Ayurveda can provide a holistic treatment for overweight and obesity. A traditional treatment program in Ayurveda aimed at weight loss primarily recommends lifestyle changes and appropriate modification in daily diet to improve health along with oral medications that would help in optimizing the metabolism steadily.....



DECEMBER 2021

ANO-RECTAL DISEASES

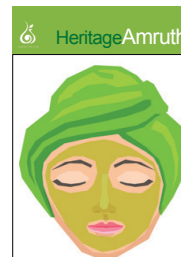
Due to change in life style, anorectal diseases like piles, fistula in ano, fissure are becoming quite common. Ayurveda has a very effective and easy treatment for anorectal diseases without any complications. Ayurveda texts explain about Arshas (piles), Bhagandara (fistula) etc. as that which trouble the person like an emery.....



APRIL 2022

SKINCARE

Ayurveda is a perfect combination of art and science for natural beauty. In Ayurveda, it is all about inner wellness which will then reflect a healthy glow on your skin. Read this issue for the best treatments for most of the skin ailments.....



AUGUST 2022

HOME REMEDIES

Chances are you all must have used a home remedy at some point: herbal teas for a cold, essential oils to dull a headache, herbal decoctions for immunity or grandma's almond milk for a better night's sleep. Now, research findings have proven that most of these remedies are more than just old wives' tales. Read this issue for such time-tested home remedies for health.



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Infertility has been treated with Ayurveda since ancient times. The most surprising fact is that there is more than 90 percent success rate in treating infertility through Ayurveda instead of taking modern IVF (in-vitro fertilization) treatments which have only a 30 percent success rate.

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Disclaimer Note: All views and opinions expressed in the respective articles are sole responsibility of the authors - Editor

Gift of Birth and Salutations to the Facilitators



We understand the concept of infertility in agriculture. If a seed does not germinate, a layperson knows it may be a deficiency in the seed itself or the soil or planting in the wrong season. While it may be true that these factors and more are involved, a layperson would not have the expertise to do much about solving the problem. This is because in reality there are lots of detailed observations and complexities involved, which are necessary to make a reliable diagnosis and corresponding solution. It is the same and perhaps far more complex in human conception.

I have observed every year, the gratitude and joy of dozens of couples, in our university hospital, who went on to conceive, but were earlier told by conventional medicine, including IVF service providers, that they will not be able to conceive. There certainly is something special in Ayurveda's biological insights of the functioning of reproductive system and methods to solve a seemingly insolvable problem. There are lessons to be learnt in this field by the world of medicine. Ayurveda interventions involve specialized therapies like Panchkarmas, use of selected pharmacologically active herbs and specific diet. But of course there are nature's limitations in achieving success in cases that have structural abnormalities. This editorial will give the reader an introduction to Ayurveda's understanding of infertility. However, a reader in actual need of a solution is advised to consult a competent gynaecologist for expert advice and consultation.

Culturally it is easy for Indians to understand the conceptual framework of infertility because the terms used in Ayurveda are familiar. The possibility

of conception is referred to as (**Garbha sambhava saamagri**) that depends on four principal factors viz. **Ritu**- the fertile period for conception, **Kshetra**- the healthy state of entire uterus, **Ambu**- the (reproductive) nutritive media which is an output of optimum metabolism and **Beeja**- healthy gametes (sperm and ovum). Abnormality in any one of these factors leads to infertility (Vandhyatva).

From the systemic perspective of Ayurveda biology, the factors that can interfere with conception are therefore fourfold: predominance of vata and pitta during ritukala instead of kapha, anatomical defect or any pathological condition of female genital tract, metabolic disorders that affect nutritive status of Ambu and quality of Beeja called Artava dushti, and Shukra dushti.

The management of infertility in males may need one or more of the following specialized interventions only available in Ayurveda management like *Virechana*, *Niruha Basti* and *Anuvasana*, *Udwartana*, *Abhyanga* and *Shirobasti*. Similarly for females, the interventions may include *Virechana*, *Vamana*, *Basti-Niruha* and *Anuvasana*, *Udwartana*, *Abhyanga*, *Uttarabasti*, *Yoni dhavana*, *Yoni pichu*, *Yoni dhupana*, *Yoni lepa* and *Yoni purana* in cases of *yoniyavpads*. The nature of these interventions will give the reader an idea of the deep systemic interventions available which can remove physiological obstructions (srtota shudhi) in micro channels.

The herbs that are beneficial in management of infertility for males are well known herbs like *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Kapikacchu* (*Mucuna pruriens*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Musali* (*Asparagus adscendens*), *Akarakarabha* (*Anacyclus pyrethrum*), *Vidarikanda* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*), *Shilajatu*, and *Swanamakshika* but their use needs expert advice. Similarly for females, the

herbs include *Ashoka* (*Saraca asoca*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Latakaranja* (*Caesalpinia crista*), *Varuna* (*Crataeva nurvula*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*), *Vidarikanda* (*Pueraria tuberosa*), *Lodhra* (*Symplocos racemosus*), *Ksheeravidari* (*Ipomoea digitata*), *Musta* (*Cyperus rotundus*), *Kanchanara* (*Bauhinia variegata*), and *Gokshura* (*Tribulus terrestris*).

Another distinctive feature of management is that apart from curative interventions, Ayurveda also employs for both males and females only if required *Vajikarana chikitsa*. This intervention provides strength, potency, virility and libido and improves seed (pushti) both qualitatively and quantitatively. There are herbs known for spermatogenesis and for sperm metabolism like: *Mudgaparni* (*Phaseolus trilolous*), *Masaparni* (*Teramnus labialis*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Musali* (*Asparagus adscendens*), *Shankhapushpi* (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), and *Pippali* (*Piper longum*). Herbs like *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somenifera*), *Masha* (*Vigna mungo*), *Musali* (*Asparagus adscendens*), and *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*) also increase the quantity of semen.

Preconception diet only for a few months before planned conception is milk, ghee, masha (*Vigna mungo*), *Amalaki* (*Embelica officianlis*), seeds of *Bhallataka* (*Semicarpus anacardium*), black gram, buttermilk, almonds, walnuts, cashews, figs, dates, raisins, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, fruits and leafy greens.

Within biological limits, Ayurveda- biology can help mothers enjoy nature's gift of birth.

Darshan Shankar
Managing Editor

Infertility has Hope



Sharad Kulkarni

Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it. Infertility has been treated with Ayurveda since ancient times. The most surprising fact is that there is more than 90 percent success rate in treating infertility through Ayurveda instead of taking modern IVF (in-vitro fertilization) treatments which have only a 30 percent success rate.

It is said that babies are the incarnation of God, the house which has echoes of baby noise remains full of joy and happiness. Every newly-wed couple gets blessed by elders who often use this line “dudho nahao fulo falo” which literally means to bathe with milk and achieve the pleasure of being served by their grandchildren. Such a blessing is given so that every house is filled with joy and happiness of children. But today, there are many married couples who despite years of effort, do not have the pleasure of having a child.

Inability of a couple to conceive within one or more years of regular unprotected sexual intercourse is called infertility. According to the Indian Society of Assisted Reproduction, 10-14% of India's population is deprived of having a child of their own. And as per the statistic reports, an estimated 20% of couples in the reproductive age group have trouble conceiving. Further several evidences suggest gradual decrease in sperm count globally and increased incidences in erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation in men and hormonal

imbalance leading to PCOS, and fibroids in uterus etc. in case of women. The rise in incidence of infertility is believed to be caused by altered lifestyle and diet which encompasses stress, improper sleep, consumption of adulterated nutrition less processed food with harmful chemicals.

Infertility Types

Primary infertility is when a couple have never conceived while secondary infertility is when couple conceives once but fails to conceive subsequently. The male partner is directly responsible in about 30-40 percent, female about 40-55 percent and both are responsible in about 10 percent of infertility cases.

Factors required for Conception

1. Healthy spermatozoa
2. Motile spermatozoa
3. Ovarian factor – ovulation
4. Tubal factor – Patent (open) fallopian tube
5. Healthy uterine cavity
6. Normalcy of hormones

Causes of Male infertility

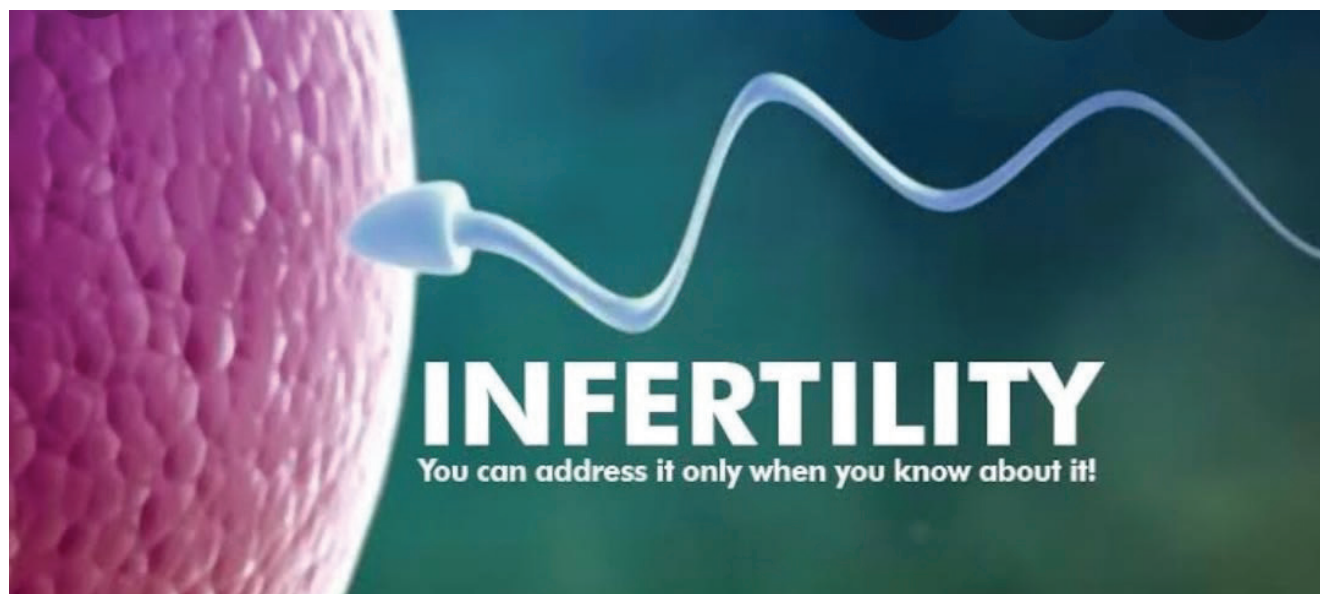
Sperm and Semen related:

- Defective spermatogenesis- Production of unhealthy sperms due to improper functioning of testicles and hormonal imbalance
- Anatomical defect obstructing the efferent duct system
- Asthenozoospermia- Loss of sperm motility

- Oligospermia – Decreased number of sperms in semen
- Azoospermia – absence of sperms in semen
- Aspermia – Failure of ejaculation of semen
- Necrozoospermia – Non -motile or dead sperm
- Teratozoospermia – Sperm with abnormal morphology
- High or low volume of ejaculate
- Low fructose content
- Undue viscosity
- High prostaglandin content

Other medical conditions include: Undescended testes, Varicocele, Infections such as epididymitis, orchitis, HIV etc., Hormonal imbalance – reduced testosterone levels, Chromosomal defects, Tumors, Vasectomy, testicular surgery, scrotal surgery, Nutritional deficiencies and Medications – Testosterone replacement therapy, long term steroid usage, anti- cancerous, antihypertensive, anticonvulsant, antidepressant medications etc. lead to impairment of sperm production.

Environmental causes such as exposure to radiations, heavy metals, cytotoxic drugs, pesticides, herbicides, organic solvents etc. hinder spermatogenesis. Overheating of testicles – raised temperature impair production and function of sperm. Sitting for long periods, wearing tight fitting clothes, working on laptops for long time can also be a cause for male infertility.





Causes of Female Infertility

- Ovulatory dysfunctions – Anovulation, oligo-ovulation, luteal phase defect
- Tubal factors – Obstruction of the fallopian tubes due to peri tubal adhesions, sterilization or previous tubal surgery, tubal endometriosis, tubal polyps, salpingitis, tubal spasm, altered tubal motility
- Uterine factors – Fibroid uterus, endometritis, uterine synechiae, congenital malformation of uterus, uterine hypoplasia, inadequate secretory endometrium, retroverted uterus
- Cervical factors – congenital elongation of cervix, pinhole cervix, cervical polyp
- Vaginal factors – Atresia of vagina, transverse vaginal septum, septate vagina, narrow introitus, vaginitis, purulent vaginal discharge
- PCOS
- Hormonal imbalance

Combined Factors

- Advanced age, over 35 in females and 40 years in males
- Dyspareunia (Painful intercourse)
- Infrequent intercourse
- Anxiety
- Lack of knowledge of coital technique and timing of coitus

Diet and Lifestyle related causes

1. Sedentary lifestyle

2. Alcohol consumption
3. Smoking
4. Consumption of hormone injected meat and dairy products

Investigations:

In Males: Routine blood investigations, Semen analysis, Hormonal study and TRUS (Transrectal ultrasound).

In Females: Routine blood investigations, Hormonal study, Ultrasonography, Hysterosalpingography and Falloposcopy.

Infertility and Ayurveda

Male infertility in Ayurveda can be studied under following concepts *Klaibya*, *Shukra kshaya*. Female infertility in Ayurveda can be studied under following concepts *Vandhyatva*, *Yoni yvapad*. Broadly infertility can be termed *Vandhyatva*.

Conception depends on proper combination of four factors (*Garbha sambhava saamagri*) namely

- Ritu – Fertile period
- Kshetra – Uterus and other reproductive organs
- Ambu – Nutritive media
- Beeja – Healthy gametes – Sperm and Ovum

Abnormality in any one of these factors leads to *Vandhyatva*.

Nidana: Injury of arthavavaha srotas, Injury of shukravaha srotas, Abnormalities of arthava, Abnormalities of shukra, Yoni yvapad and Shukra kshaya.

Nidana of vandhyatva can be classified into:

Disorders of the factors of Conception:

- Disorders of Ritukala – Predominance of vata and pitta during ritukala instead of kapha
- Disorders of Kshetra – Anatomical defect or any pathological condition of female genital tract
- Disorders of Ambu
- Disorders of Beeja – Artava dushti, shukra dushti leading to abnormality of artava and shukra

Disorders of physiology of Conception:

- Maithuna asahishnuta – Dyspareunia
- Maithuna anichha – Frigidity
- Yoni rogas – Yoni vyapad, Yoni arsha
- Rajodushti – Anartava
- Shukradushti
- Shukra kshaya

Management:

Therapies

MALES	FEMALES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virechana 2. Basti – Niruha and Anuvasana 3. Udwartana 4. Abhyanga 5. Shirobasti 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virechana 2. Vamana 3. Basti – Niruha and Anuvasana 4. Udwartana 5. Abhaynga 6. Uttarabasti 7. Yoni dhavana, Yoni pichu, Yoni dhupana, Yoni lepa, Yoni purana in cases of yoniyavpads

Drugs beneficial in Management of Infertility

MALES	FEMALES
Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>), Kapikacchu (<i>Mucuna pruriens</i>), Shatavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>), Musali (<i>Asparagus adscendens</i>) Akarakarabha (<i>Anacyclus pyrethrum</i>), Vidarikanda (<i>Pueraria tuberosa</i>), Gokshura (<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>), Shilajatu, Abhraka, Swarna, Swanamakshika etc.	Ashoka (<i>Saraca asoca</i>), Shatavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>), Guggulu (<i>Commiphora mukul</i>), Latakaranja (<i>Caesalpinia crista</i>), Varuna (<i>Crataeva nurvula</i>), Ashwagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>), Bala (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>), Vidarikanda (<i>Pueraria tuberosa</i>), Lodhra (<i>Symplocos racemosus</i>), Ksheeravidari (<i>Ipomoea digitata</i>), Musta (<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>), Kanchanara (<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>), Gokshura (<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>), Abhraka, Swarna etc.

Vajikarana Chikitsa:

The branch of Ayurveda intended to promote health and virility of healthy men and sexually weak individual is Vajikarana. Vajikarana chikitsa provides strength, potency, virility, carnal excitement and

pleasure during intercourse. It is necessary to perform Shodhana/ purification before vajikarana for better results. Vajikarana improves semen both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Vajikarana includes the following groups of drugs:

Shukra Pravartaka Dravyas:

The drugs which increase production and flow of semen are known as Shukra pravartaka. Sankalpa (determination) and women are considered the best shukra pravartaka other drugs include Ksheera (Milk), Masha (*Vigna mungo*), Amalaki (*Embelica officianlis*), Bhallataka (*Semicarpus anacardium*).

Shukra Janana Dravyas:

The drugs which enhance spermatogenesis and also improve sperm metabolism are shukra janana dravyas. Mudgaparni (*Phaseolus trilobus*), Masaparni (*Teramnus labialis*), Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*),

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Musali (*Asparagus adscendens*), Shankhapushpi (*Convolvulus pluricaulis*), Pippali (*Piper longum*) and Sharkara (sugar) are Shukra janana dravyas.

Shukrala Dravyas:

The drugs which increase the quantity of semen are Shukrala. Ashwagandha (*Withania somenifera*), Masha (*Vigna mungo*), Musali (*Asparagus adscendens*), Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) are Shukrala dravyas

Shukra shodhaka Dravyas:

The drugs which detoxify semen are called Shukra shodhaka. Kushta (*Saussurea lappa*), Elavaluka (*Brunus cerasus*), Katphala (*Myrica nagi*), Samudraphena (Internal cell of *Sepia officinalis*), Kadamba niriyasa (*Anthocephalus indicus*), Ikshuraka (*Saccharum officinarum*), Kandeskshu (*Saccharum spontaneum*), Kokilaksha (*Asteracantha longifolia*), Usira (*Vetiveria zizanioides*) are drugs known to purify semen.

Other groups include Shukra rechaka drugs which help in evacuation of semen- Brhati (*Solanum indicum*), Kantakari (*Solanum xanthocarpum*).

Shukra sthmbhaka drugs which help in retention of semen and erection – Jatiphala (*Myristica fragrans*), Akarkarabha (*Anacyclus pyrethrum*).

Formulations used in management of infertility:

MALES	FEMALES
1. Ashwagandhadi churna	1. Ashokarishta
2. Akarakarabhadi churna	2. Lodhrasava
3. Aswagandha ghrita	3. Rajapravartini vati
4. Amruthaprash ghrita	4. Pushpadhavana rasa
5. Ashwagandhadi lehya	5. Shatavaryadi churna
6. Siddha makaradhwaja	6. Varunadi kshaya
7. Purnachandra rasa	
8. Shakravallabha rasa	

Diet and Lifestyle Modifications:

Diet: Avoiding spicy, salty, pungent, kshara (alkaline food), Processed foods, Curd, Processed meat.

Consume Milk, Ghee, Black gram, Buttermilk, Almonds, Walnuts, Cashews, Figs, Dates, Raisins, Pumpkin seeds, Sunflower seeds, Fruits, Leafy greens.

Lifestyle: Avoid day sleep, sleep deprivation, excess use of electronic gadgets.

Have an active lifestyle with regular physical activities like walking, jogging etc. Practicing yoga

and pranayama, Kegel's exercise is advised. Digital detox, adequate sleep of 6-8 hours is proven beneficial.

Garbhadhana and Putreshti yajna are done prior to conception. Garbhadhana includes purificatory therapies (Vamana, Virechana, Basti) and food prepared with nourishing ingredients like Shali, Ghrita, Ksheera, Masha is taken after observing celibacy for a month. After that Putreshti yajna is done. Hymns are recited before intercourse for fulfillment of healthy progeny.

Case study:

A couple married for 2 years, male aged 36 years and female aged 34 years were longing conception. Counselling for both was done taking complete medical history and few investigations were suggested for both. The reports were analyzed, her investigation parameters were fine except minute changes required for which Herbal medications were given for course of 1 month. The Semen analysis showed drastic variations from the normal range. Purificatory therapy (Virechana) was planned with Ashwagandha ghrita. After a gap of 15 days basti was done. Followed by which Vajikarana chikitsa was done for a duration of 1 month. Semen analysis was repeated again there was considerable improvement in the parameters. Garbhadhana vidhi was followed by the couple and they conceived within 2 months.

Stay positive and keep the hope and spirits up, it is often the last key in the bunch that opens the lock...

Dr. Sharad Kulkarni is Consultant Surgeon (Ayurveda) | Best Selling Author | Vlogger, Chanakya Awardee, CMO and Director - Jeevottama Health, Bengaluru, www.drsharad.com, email: sharadsrd@gmail.com

Infertility: Siddha Perspective



R. Sridharan

Ancient days were the days where there used to be large families and several children. Those days, only a few couples suffered from infertility. However, today's scenario is very different and alarming. Infertility is a serious, worrying problem prevailing and the affected couples are increasing day by day. Several infertility clinics are mushrooming every day.

Infertility cases today are increasing due to lifestyle modification, lack of physical exercise, altered food habits, stress, anxiety, fear etc. Infertility has become a major medical concern in young population in all types of demographical settings in India.

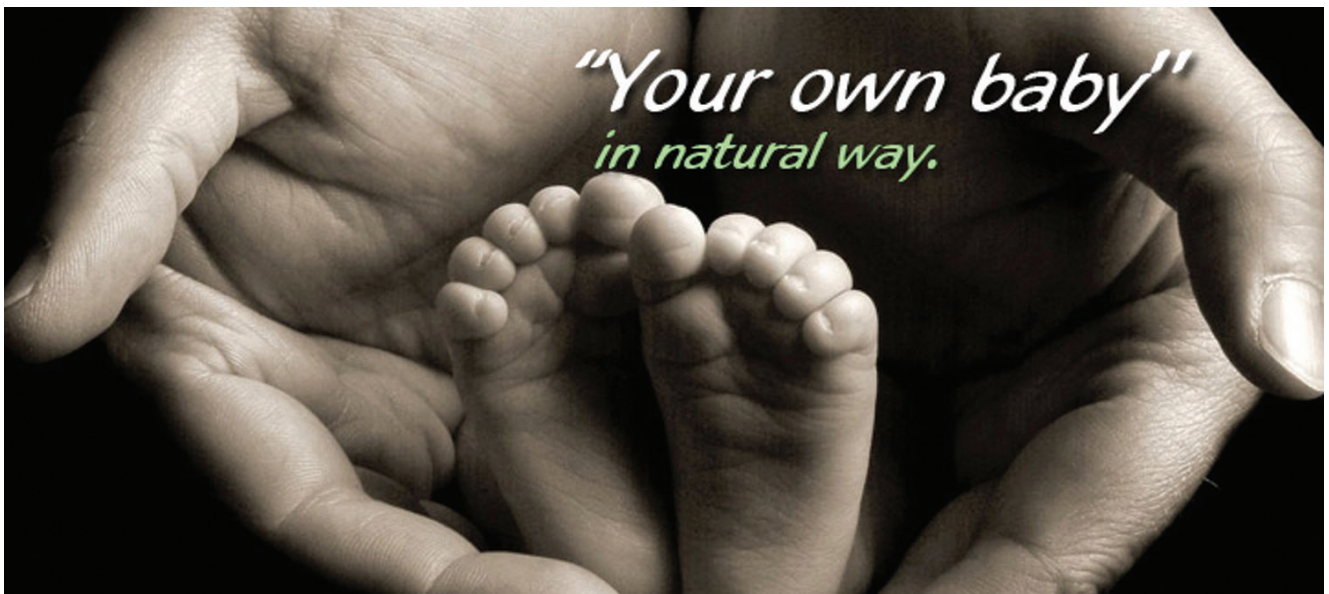
Siddha Concept for Infertility

In Siddha, infertility is termed as 'Maladu' where the mother is unable to get pregnant. There are six types of Maladu:

- Kaga maladu: No issues after two babies.
- Kathalii maladu: No issues after one baby.
- Kanma maladu: Frequent abortions. No issues.
- Aan maladu: It means weightless sperm.

- Pen maladu: Bleeding during each menstrual cycle where bleeding may be yellow, has pus and urine
- Niranthara maladu: Obesity

Siddhars in ancient India practised methods aligned in harmony with nature. Hence, they were successful in designing the line of treatment for infertility, particularly for females with the treasures of Siddha principles.



According to Siddha, Infertility is caused due to: Psychosomatic disorders due to stress, Hormonal disorders, Irregular menstruation, Amenorrhea, Viral infection, Vaginal infection, intercourse on non-ovulating days, Venereal disease, Tubal factors like Fallopian tube block, PCOS – Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Endometriosis and Fibroid Uterus.

Siddha Treatment for infertility

Siddha treats infertility as per the conditions of the individual person. Both external and internal medicines are used to cure infertility.

- Medicines like Churnas, Kashayas, Legiyams, Mezugus, Kuligais, and Arishtams are used in the treatment. These medications ensure the maturation of follicles and the proper development of the egg.
- Chendooram and Parpams are used for positive results.
- It is advisable that the patient should continue the medicines for six months.
- All these medicines along with good diets are helpful in enhancing vitality, desire and stamina.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out by the author to check the efficacy of Siddha medicine for PCOS as it is the leading cause for infertility. The study was carried out with an aim and objective:

- To prove the efficacy of siddha treatment on Female infertility

- To observe the rate of fertilization and rule out other causes of infertility
- To provide safe, cost effective, non-surgical, non-hormonal replacement therapy.
- To provide an effective treatment to the poor patients

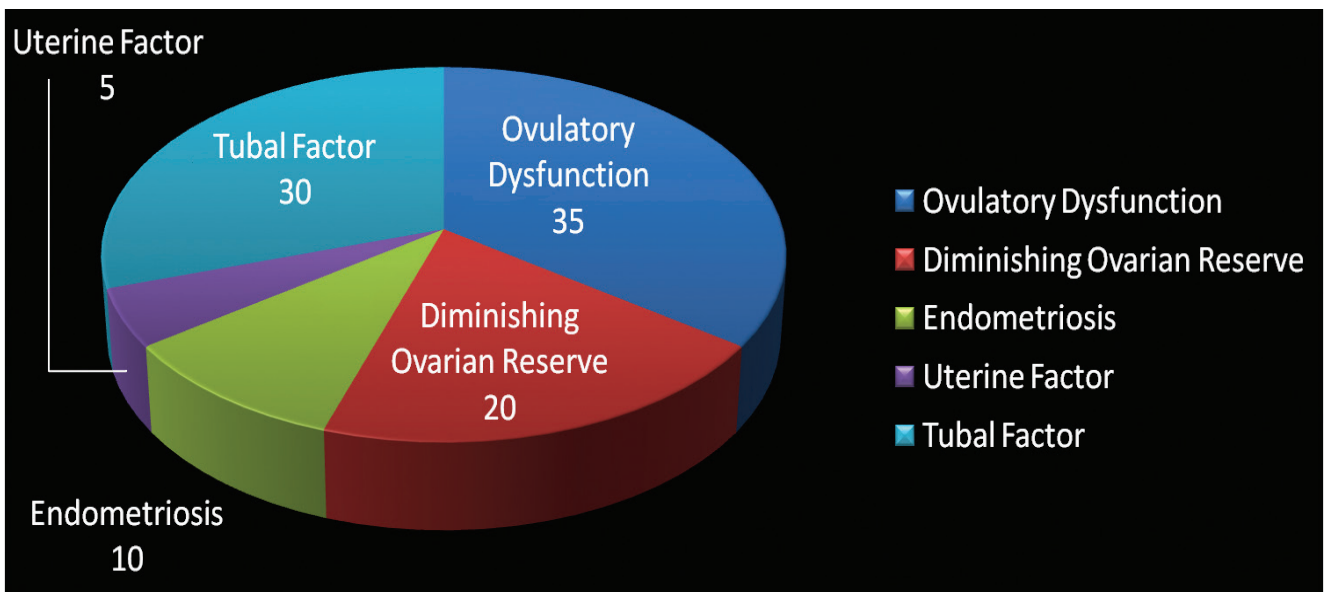
Materials and Methods

Total 50 patients were selected in Siddha OPD and at private clinic based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The treatment was given for duration of three months to six months and investigations were done before and after treatment.

Inclusion criteria: Married women (Age group 23 to 38), Infertility patients, PCOD, Irregular periods / scanty menses (due to anovulatory cycle), Anovulatory cycle and Hormonal disturbances. Unmarried women and women with congenital abnormalities were excluded.

Treatment Protocol

The treatment was given for duration of three months to six months. As per siddha treatment procedure the first line of treatment is purgation to normalize the altered thathu for which the prepared drug AGASTHIYAR KULAMBU is used (This is a compound drug) with 2 gm of Ficus religiosa tender leaf paste (Arasu) early morning on empty stomach was advised for three days with diet restriction.



From the third day the research drug was given to the patients. This is a three herbal combination drug which includes Maramanjil (*Berberis tinctoria*), Chatha – kuppai (*Anethum graveolens*), karunjeeragam (*Nigella sativa*) and palm jaggery at the dose of 5 gm with fennel seed decoction twice a day and continued till conception.

The second important medicine was a herbal mineral preparation consisting of a combination of castor oil, varikumatti (*Citrullus colocynthis*), vilvam (*Aegle marmelos*), Tulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*) and naga parpam. The oil 2 to 5 ml with hot water was advised to the patients on empty stomach to regulate menstrual cycle and advised to continue till conception. The siddha classical text describes the above-mentioned preparation for indication of all kinds of female infertility disorders and also quite beneficial to regulate the female urogenital disorders. The ingredients of the oil contain the following:

Castor oil: It is a Triglyceride which has mainly ricinoleic acid and other fatty acids. The action of the oil is anti-spasmodic, laxative

Vilvam (*Aegle marmelos*): The chemical constituent Marmalasin is present in the bark and also some volatile oil is present in the leaf. It is a cold potency drug.

Thulasi (*Ocimum sanctum*): The chemical constituents Eugenol, volatile oil, carvacol, caryophyllin, glycosides. This is a hot potency drug.

Varikummati (*Citrullus colocynthis*): The fruit contains rich in Mystric acid, Palmitic acid, Linolenic acid.

Naga parpam (Zinc): The natural source of zinc undergoes purification process (pudam podal) and prepared as medicine. The Naga parpam is used in siddha preparation for all type of male and female genital and urinary tract disorders.

Observation

In the study 70% patients were house wives and 30% patients were professionals. During the treatment all the patients were not advised any other medication. Irregular periods, absent of menstruation, scanty, painful menstruation were reduced. FSH and LH hormone report revealed that the ratio came to normal. The scan report revealed improvement of polycystic appearance of ovaries and improvement of matured follicles were noted. From the observation made before and after treatment the following inference were:

- The symptoms like irregular menstruation improved and patients had normal duration of menstruation
- The obese patients had reduced the weight and felt a feeling of lightness

Discussion

- According to Siddha management for PCOS, kapha and vata are vitated. The given treatment acts to improve the hormone utilization and regulates hormonal imbalance.
- The powder of herbal drugs and the medicated oil are beneficial for aggravated doshas and regulate menstrual disorders.



Aloe vera



Saraca asoca



Melia dubia



Asparagus racemosus

The treatment of siddha drugs is more effective in PCOS which helps for Infertility

- Out of 50 patients 37 patients conceived within six-month period. The remaining 13 patients are still undergoing treatment.
- This study proves that siddha medicine can be a suitable choice for the treatment PCOS and Infertility. Further RCT studies should be done on large scale to prove its efficacy.

Malattu karpam

The siddha classical text described one the simplest preparation indicated for female infertility This is a combination of Moongil root (*Bambusa arundinacea*), Naval root (*Syzygium cuminum*) and Karuvel root (*Acacia nilotica*). The above mentioned tree roots each 5 gm are prepared as decoction and consumed with palm jaggery and cow butter for female infertility.

Dietary Advice

‘Food itself is medicine and medicine itself is food’ is one of the basic principles of Siddha system of medicine. The diet plays a major role and described in detail about our traditional food preparation in classical Siddha text PATHARTHA GUNA CHINTHAMANI.

As per the reference we recommend the food supplements like Dry grapes, fig, dates, peas, sesame, black gram, soya ground nut, resins and greens etc. Recommended diet for women’s health which should be followed during the menstrual cycle (first day to fifth day) Ellurandai is advised (Sesame ball). The traditional ulunthu kanji (black gram soup) is advised from 6th day to 14th day. The traditional venthaya kanji (fenugreek decoction) is advised from 15th day to 28th day.

Fried small onions with ghee and honey and Moringa flower boiled with milk are advised.

Diet restriction

During treatment, the diet restriction is strictly followed:

- Avoid high glycemic index foods
- High salt, tamarind and spicy foods
- High fat

- Processed foods
- Sweetened beverages, chocolates, ice cream
- Packed foods and Junk foods
- Alcohol, caffeine, Nicotine and other addictions

Yoga Karpam

- The aim of yoga is to maintain both physical and mental health, therefore bringing about balance and harmony. With continuity, the practice of yoga helps women to manage all situations positively and to maintain good health. Regular practice of yoga develops muscular strength, avoids obesity, assist the development of the reproductive organs and balance hormones.
- Some of the yoga techniques that can be followed are asanas which include Padmasana, Padahastasana, Pachimottanasana, Bhujangasana, Dhanurasana, Badhakonasana, Shavasana and pranayama which includes Pranava, Bhramari, Nadi shuddhi, Chandra pranayama and meditation.

Medicinal plants used for infertility

Siddha system gives importance to medicinal plants as first line of treatment. It states that while treating, administer herbs first and if needed treat with higher order medicines (metals and minerals). Some of the Important medicinal plants used to treat female infertility in Siddha system of medicine are: Ashoka – *Saraca asoca*, Malaivembu – *Melia dubia* Arasu - *Ficus religiosa*, Thanneervitan – *Asparagus racemosus*, Katrazhi – *Aloe vera* etc.

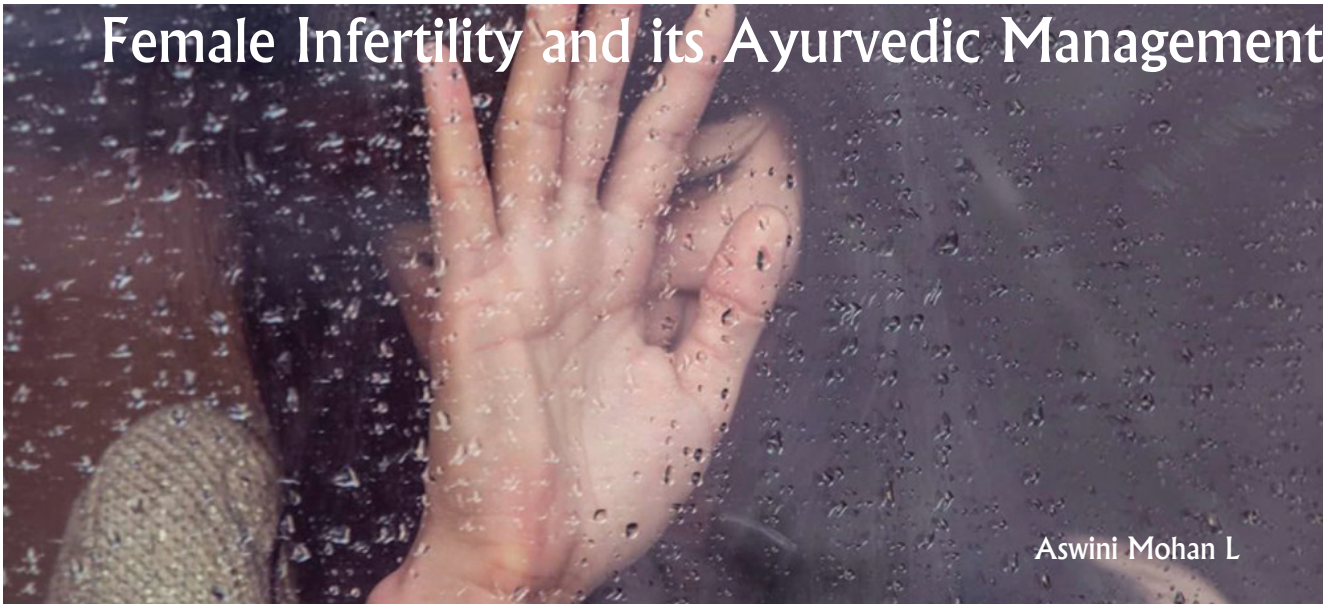
Concluding Remarks

The solution for healthy life is to lead life in traditional way, following proper diet, yoga and healthy lifestyle. Our study proves effective in treating PCOS and thereby infertility. Further research studies are needed on large scale to know its full efficacy. In modern days people lead a stressful life. This should change. Holistic approach is the cornerstone of Siddha treatment.

Study Conducted by Dr.R.Sridharan, Chief Medical Officer (NFSG) & Nodal Officer (Siddha-Cum-State Medicinal Plant Board), GoI, Puducherry.

No More Baby Blues

Female Infertility and its Ayurvedic Management



Aswini Mohan L

In the 21st century, women are blessed with the freedom to choose their own careers, financial independence, opportunities to travel and are enjoying full social lives, unlike their mothers and grandmothers in the earlier days. At the same time, they are carrying greater responsibilities financially, emotionally and even physically. In the work place, the modern woman is expected to perform as well as her male counterpart. In essence modern life presents so many more hurdles and distractions from fertility that women are unsurprisingly **delaying having children.**

This is entirely in line with a culture in which our life expectancy has been raised and we are enjoying unprecedented longevity and health. For modern woman there is, however, a price to pay: **Fertility!**

It is a commonly held belief that career women who have delayed having children into their 30s or

40s have greater difficulty conceiving. The media is certainly full of apocalyptic stories about women leaving motherhood too late. Ayurvedic medicine, the oldest and most intelligent mind-body systems of healing has the answers. The Charaka Samhita, the original texts Ayurveda states that provided optimum conditions are created, the female body is capable of conceiving and carrying a child at any age up to menopause.

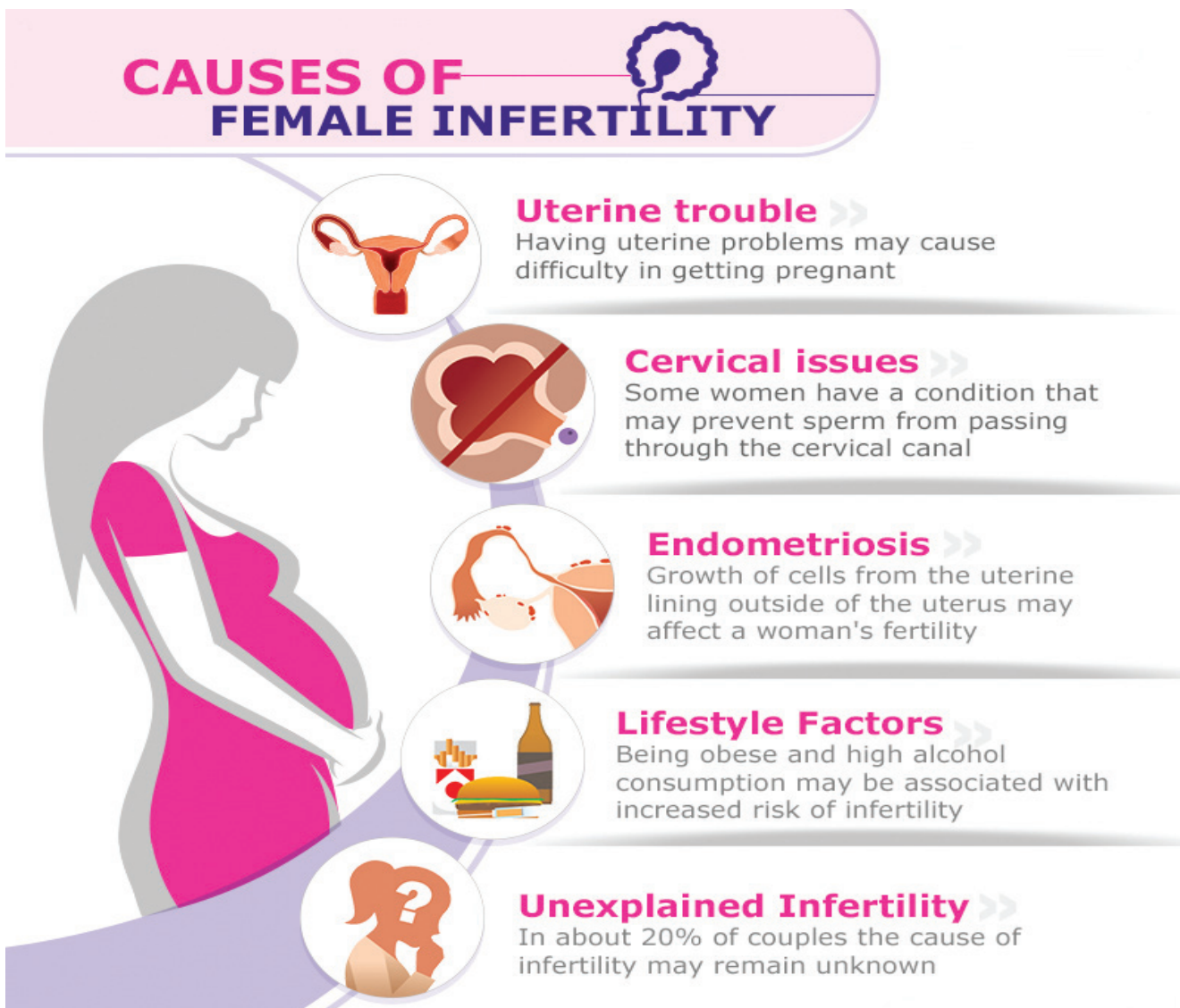
Factors required for Fertility in Females

In females, regular menstrual cycles are the first and foremost thing that is an indicator to her fertility potential. A regular menstrual cycle should have an interval between 21-35 days, with average cycle length of about 28 days, the upper limit of blood loss in a normal menstruation is considered as 80 ml and the number of bleeding days may vary from 2-7 days. A normal menstrual cycle indicates that the hypothalamo-pituitary-ovarian axis is well coordinated, resulting in regular ovulation, the endometrium (inner mucosal lining of the uterus) is responsive to the ovarian hormones which enables the cycle of endometrial shedding which results in menstruation as well as the regeneration process which is very much essential for implanting a fertilized ovum and that the outflow tract is patent.

Ovulatory Dysfunction

Oligo-ovulation or anovulation - results in infertility because no oocyte will be released monthly. In the absence of an oocyte, there is no opportunity for fertilization and pregnancy. This accounts for the most common cause of female infertility. Ovulatory disorders can be broadly classified as:

- Hypothalamic amenorrhea or functional hypothalamic amenorrhea (FHA) (Hypogonadotropic hypogonadal anovulation). FHA is associated with eating disorders and excessive exercise which results in elevated cortisol, which causes a suppression of GnRH from hypothalamus, which in turn results in a decrease in follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), and luteinizing hormone (LH) from the anterior pituitary gland. These result in abnormal follicle growth, anovulation, and low oestrogen levels.



- Ormogonadotropic normoestrogenic anovulation: most common type is polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). PCOS accounts for 80 to 85% of ovulatory dysfunction and affects 8% of all reproductive-aged females.
- Premature ovarian failure ie, Hypergonadotropic hypoestrogenic anovulation (POI): is defined as menopause before the age of 40. This disease is characterized by a lack of adequate number of follicles for ovulation, a decrease in estrogen, loss of oocytes, and infertility. The most common cause of POI is Turner syndrome, monosomy of the sex chromosomes leading to a 45X karyotype. Smoking, autoimmune disorders, chemotherapy can all lead to POI. There can be menopausal symptoms like vaginal dryness, hot flashes, loss of libido etc.

Tubal Disease

Tubal damage or obstruction can be due to upper genital tract infections, genital tuberculosis, or from other causes of pelvic peritonitis like a ruptured appendicitis. This shows the importance of treating infective vaginal discharges as they can ascend to the upper genital tract organs and cause endometritis and tubal damage. Tubal damage can lead to ectopic pregnancy and infertility if there is bilateral tubal block. This is also one of the major reasons for IVF (In-vitro Fertilization)

Uterine Factors

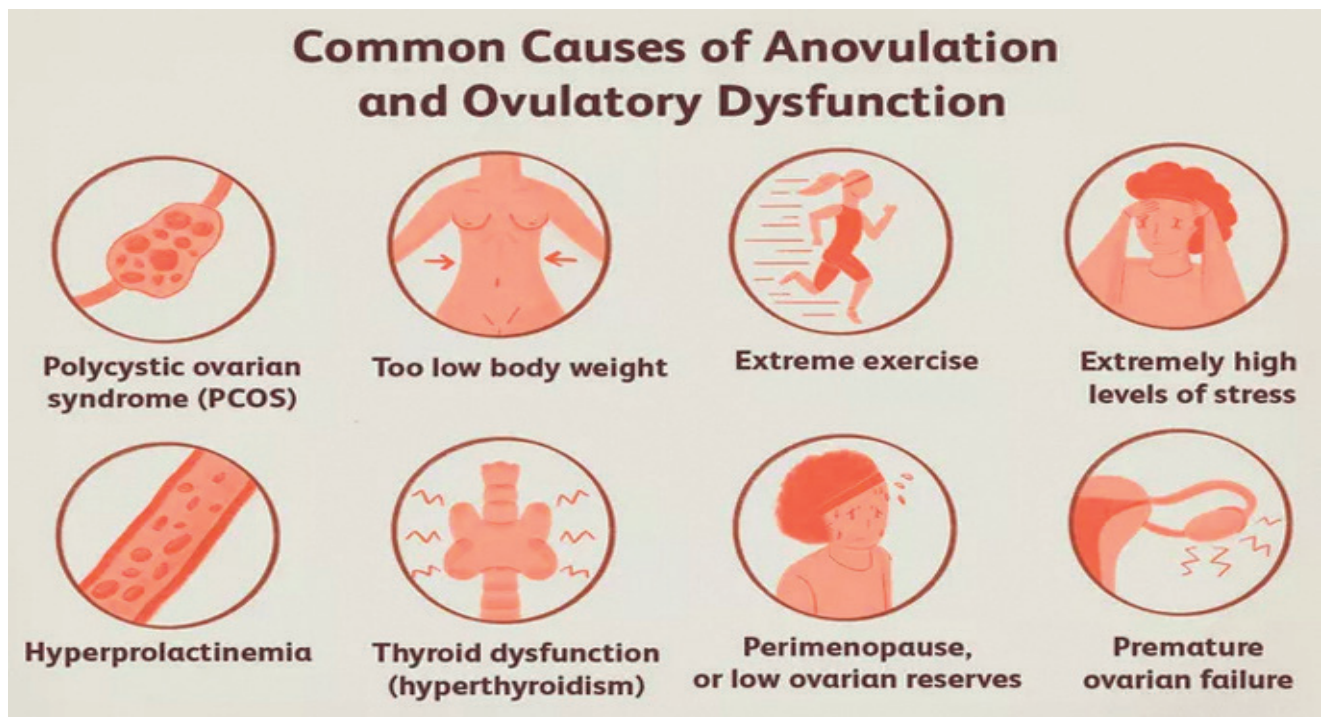
Uterine causes of infertility are associated with either space-occupying lesions or reduced endometrial receptivity. Submucous fibroids (within the uterine cavity) may impair implantation. Congenital uterine abnormalities like septate uterus are associated with infertility and recurrent pregnancy loss. Thin endometrium is also a reason for implantation failure and cancellation of many IVF cycles.

Cervical Factors

This can be due to hostile cervical mucous resulting in impaired sperm penetration to the uterine cavity or antisperm antibodies immobilizing spermatozoa. There can be anatomical defects as well leading to infertility.

Pelvic Endometriosis

Endometriosis is the presence of endometrial tissue outside the uterine cavity. Adenomyosis is presence of endometrial tissue in the muscle layer of the uterus. It is evidenced by painful menstrual cycles, painful coitus and infertility in advanced cases. It affects 10% to 15% of reproductive-age women. Of women with endometriosis, 40% to 50% will experience infertility. The inflammation impairs ovarian and tubal function resulting in defective follicular formation, fertilization, and



implantation. It is also associated with pelvic adhesions and/or masses that distort pelvic anatomy which will inherently impair tubal motility, oocyte release, and sperm motility. The advanced stages of endometriosis have poor outcomes in modern medicine even with Artificial Reproductive Techniques.

Ayurvedic Management

Ayurveda considers infertility as “*Vandhyatwa*” and it is said to arise as a result of uncorrected menstrual disorders, untreated disorders of genital tract, as well as due to psychological factors. Ayurveda has a holistic approach towards fertility. Both physical and psychological aspects of the partners are given importance for optimal fertility. Females are advised to follow certain diet and regimen right from the onset of menarche and it has to be continued in each menstrual cycle which ensures that the hormonal balance required for healthy ovulation and preparation of the endometrium for conception is maintained. Couples planning for conception are advised to follow specific diet and regimen called as “*Garbhadhana Vidhi*” which prepares them at a physical, psychological and spiritual level for a healthy progeny.

Principles of Management

Ayurveda considers three doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) and seven dhatus (rasa, rakta, mamsa, medas, asthi, majja and shukra) in the management of any disease. A balance of tridoshas and excellence of the seven dhatus are necessary for fertility as the reproductive tissues are represented by the last dhatu which is the shukra dhatu.

Menstruation and Ovulation are considered as “*Agneya*” in Ayurveda which means diet and regimen which increases the metabolism at a cellular level will maintain normalcy of menstrual cycles. Excess use of these agneya dravyas ie, hot potency drugs can lead to prolonged menstrual cycles with heavy bleeding. Based on the chronicity of menstrual irregularities/ infertility and based on the strength of the etiological factors as well as the extent of involvement of Tridoshas, three stages of management are adopted.

“*Tatra alpe langhanam pathyam, madhye langhana pacanam, prabhute sodhanam*”

If there are only minor aberrations, then correcting lifestyle and regular exercise will correct the problems. In the next stage, lifestyle changes as well as medicines will be required. If the disease process is very severe then purificatory Panchakarma treatments becomes necessary along with internal medicines.

Specific Management

Ovulatory disorders

It can be due to two basic pathologies as per Ayurveda.

- Due to excess vitiation of Vata and Kapha dosha which causes delayed menstruation. This is due to causes considered as “*Santarpanaja*”. It includes causes which give excess nutrients to the body or which hamper the excess calorie burning down in the system. For example, resorting to regular junk food intake, day sleep, lack of exercise etc will lead to weight gain due to improper body metabolism. This leads to blockage of channels in the body (Srotas), which gradually affects the menstrual cycles.

“*Vata Kapha avrita margabhyam artavam nashyati streya*”

“*Doshair avrita margatwat artavam nashyati streeya*”

This is corrected by removing the obstruction by usage of agneya dravyas like fish, horse gram, sour substances, sesame seeds, etc and also by regular exercise. In severe cases where the cycles come after a gap of 4-6 months, Panchakarma treatments may be necessary.

- Due to vitiation of Vata and Pitta dosha: The second cause is considered as “*Apatarpanaja*” i.e., undernourishment of the reproductive tissues which results in delayed or absent ovulation. It can be due to irregular food habits, taking less quantity of food than the calorie requirement, excess stress and so on. There can be associated weight loss in the patient. This is corrected by giving nourishing drugs and therapies.

Uttar Basti

WHAT IS IT?

Uttar Basti

cures genito-urinary disorders with the help of medicinal oils administered into the urinary bladder or uterus.

IN FEMALES

Uttar Basti Treatment addresses:

Amenorrhea
Dysmenorrhea
Menorrhagia
Leucorrhoea
Tubal Blocks
Dysuria
PCOS
Urethral Stricture

IN MALES

Uttar Basti Treatment addresses:

Urinary Incontinence
Prostate enlargement
Neurogenic bladder and Cystitis
Urethral Stricture

Tubal Disease

Tubal factors are considered to be predominantly due to impaired Vata dosha, and in females a special treatment known as Uttaravasthi can be performed to correct the tubal damage. It is done under aseptic precautions by a well-trained doctor after excluding any pelvic infections. Kashaya (medicated decoctions) or sneha (medicated oils or/and ghee) can be used as per the condition. Uttara vasthi is performed after proper cleansing Panchakarma therapies.

Cervical Factors

Cervical factors are corrected with the aid of immunomodulatory internal medicines as well as by local gynaecological procedures like Yoni Poorana (filling the vaginal canal with lipid/decoction-based medicines) and Yoni prakshalana (douching).

Pelvic Endometriosis

This is a complex condition with involvement of tridoshas as well as deeper dhatus in advanced cases and hence medicines are given for Snehapana where medicated ghee and/or sesame oil-based medicines are given internally for 5-7 days followed by Virechana (purgation). Snehapana is done after doing few days of Deepana and Pachana where some medicines are given to correct digestion and metabolism. Panchakarma therapies like Vasthi (medicated enema), Uttara vasthi and Nasya (nasal instillation of medicines) are also performed as per condition.

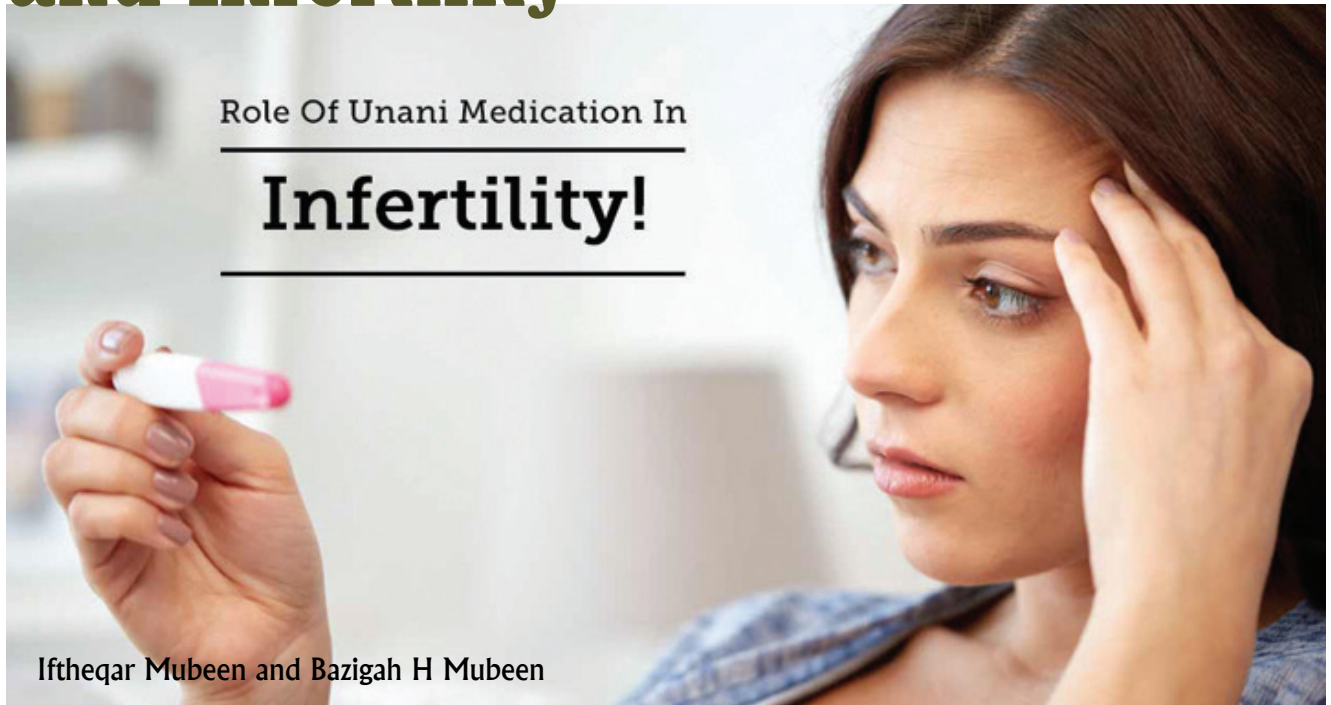
Female infertility due to any of the above causes can be managed well with Ayurveda. Diet, regimen, medicines and panchakarma treatments help in achieving conception based on the cause and chronicity of the problem.

“Vata Pittabhyam ksheeyate rajah”

Sushruta Samhita describes an entity named Artava Kshaya, where irregular cycles with scanty flow are the main features. The management is by using above mentioned principles

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Autoimmune Disorders and Infertility



Role Of Unani Medication In

Infertility!

Iftheqar Mubeen and Bazigah H Mubeen

Unani medicine has been a savior for millions of couples who had given up all hopes of embracing parenthood naturally and safely without any complications or side effects (as often seen in the case of conventional treatment).

Infertility vs. Sterility

Although a common man uses these two words synonymously, there is a difference between them. The word **sterility** is the inability to achieve pregnancy approximately after one calendar year of unsafe sex (i.e., trying to have a baby) whereas **infertility** is the inability to give birth to a living baby. It means that the word sterility denotes absolute inability to conceive whereas in case of infertility, pregnancy (conception) may take place but there may be issues with the baby or it could

be due to complications of pregnancy which may result in inability to give birth to a live baby. In other words, Infertility is the inability of a woman or man to contribute to conception or childbirth.

Causes and Predisposing Factors responsible for Infertility

The contributing factors and causes of infertility are the nutritional issues, consumption of the food items not suitable to be consumed during pregnancy (spicy food, etc.), increased frequency of

sexual activity which may be physically harmful to the embryo or foetus, similarly increased physical activity which is detrimental to the foetus or embryo, infections (pelvic inflammatory diseases due to specific type of infection), certain types of endocrine disorders like diabetes and other systemic diseases, lifestyle disorders like obesity, heavy smoking, etc. Among women, suppression of ovulation due to certain systemic diseases, obesity, psychological issues, anatomical factors like narrow passage of the female genitalia, etc., are some of the causes of infertility.

Infertility due to Autoimmune Diseases

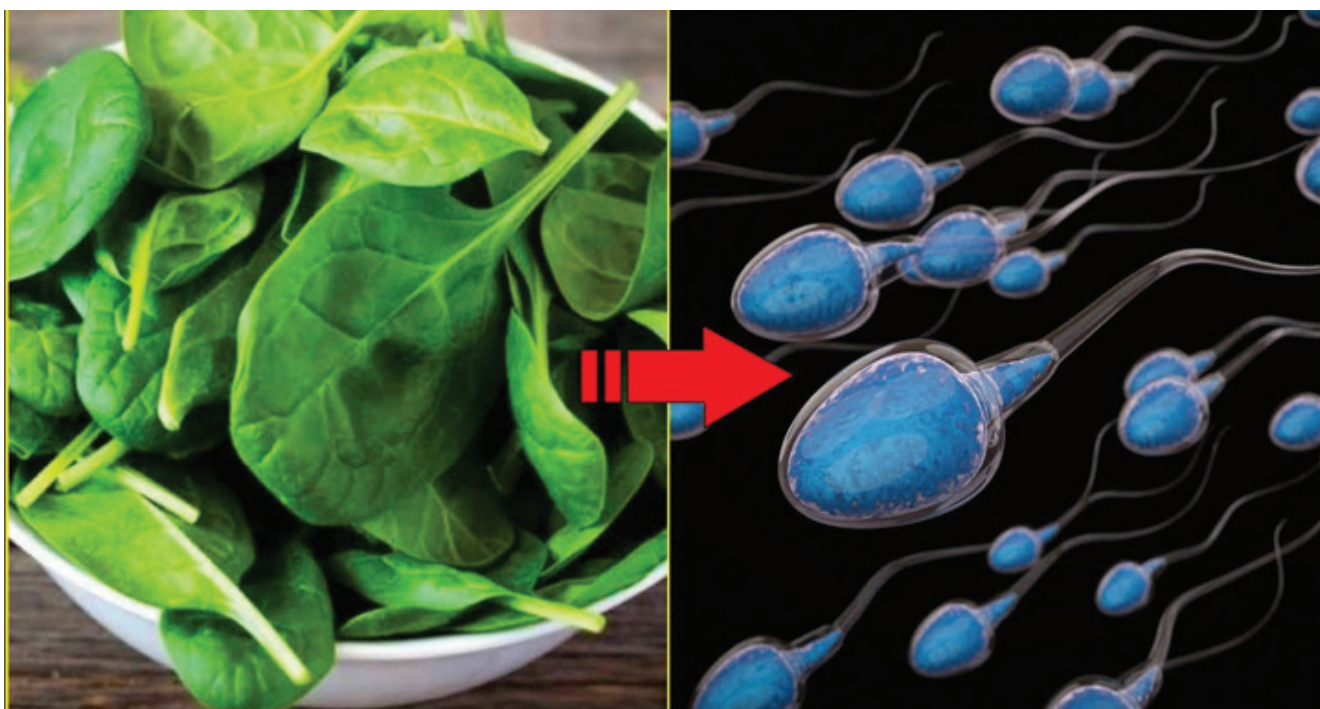
Autoimmune disorders or the issues related to certain autoimmune diseases play a major role in otherwise unexplained cases of infertility. This is one of the important etiological (causative) factors of infertility. Infertility and subfertility, decreased parity, etc., occur in women with certain autoimmune disorders. This is attributed to inflammatory diseases, certain medications which are known to be toxic to the gonads (i.e., testes and/or ovaries). A careful study of these etiological or causative factors is necessary to manage the issue suitably and to the satisfaction of the affected party. Some of the autoimmune disorders which are a cause of infertility are discussed here.

Antinuclear Antibodies

In some cases, sperm auto-agglutinating and auto-immobilizing antibodies can develop against a person's own sperms which may greatly reduce the fertility. This type of condition is noticed in Sjogren's syndrome (a disorder of immune system characterized by two common symptoms: dry eyes and a dry mouth, and is usually accompanied by other disorders related to immune system), Raynaud's disease (the smaller arteries that supply blood to our skin become narrow limiting blood flow to affected areas, termed as vasospasm), Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE- characterised by the body's immune system mistakenly attacking healthy cells and tissues which may affect joints, skin, kidneys, etc.).

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a painful condition of the inside of the uterus, which results from the growth of the endometrium lining outside of the uterus. It involves the ovaries and fallopian tubes (a link between ovary and uterus on either side). This condition in advanced stage will result in thickening of the tissues and bleeding at the affected site with every menstrual cycle. Sometimes cysts in the ovaries may also form which are called endometriomas. This condition is painful and eventually results in the fertility issues.





Coagulation disorders and Fertility

Some of the clotting disorders result in the hypercoagulatory state which results in the blood clotting disorders. This results either in the failure in conception (infertility) or recurrent miscarriage. The example of such a type of disorder is systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). SLE may affect reproductive system of both males and females which may be due to prevention of successful fertilization, failure in effective implantation of fertilized egg to the uterine wall, complications during pregnancy as well as during labor.

Addison's disease

Addison's disease, which is also termed as adrenal insufficiency is characterized by the reduction in production of cortisol by the suprarenal glands which affects the fertility among females, and is due to the reduced level of circulating androgens which are important in maintaining fertility.

Increased Homocysteine in Blood

An elevated level of homocysteine in the blood results in a condition known as hypercoagulability. The word coagulation refers to blood clotting, and hypercoagulability means that the blood clots more readily than it should. When this occurs in blood vessels supplying blood to placenta, it may contribute to the clots that block the placental blood vessels resulting in miscarriage.

Celiac disease and Infertility

Celiac disease is an autoimmune condition characterized by the increased sensitivity to a food protein, gluten which is present in food grains like barley, wheat, etc., and is considered to be a nourishing component of the food. A few studies indicate a link between celiac disease and infertility. However, this topic needs more research and exploration to arrive at a conclusion about the link between celiac disease and fertility issues.

Management of Infertility due to Autoimmune and other disorders - Diet and Lifestyle Advice

Increased consumption of dairy or milk products, dry fruits (preferably almonds, walnuts, etc.), other fresh and juicy fruits like peaches, pears, plums, bananas, etc., are beneficial in improving reproductive health. Consumption of spices like ajwain, cumin, turmeric, cardamom, etc., pulses like black gram, green gram, etc., seeds like flax seeds which are rich sources of B-complex and are considered to be good antioxidants, are helpful in maintaining the reproductive health. Omega-3 fatty acids are known for their health benefits and the consumption of the same is very much helpful during pregnancy. Certain foods like caffeine, fats, refined carbohydrates, bakery items, carbonated drinks, excessive non-vegetarian food should either be avoided or consumed in moderate quantity.

Smoking and consumption of alcohol should totally be avoided. Care should be taken to see that the mental stress is avoided as this stress is harmful especially during pregnancy and lactation. Maintenance of ideal weight is essential for females during reproductive age. Regular meditation and yoga therapy may act as stress busters and may benefit a large number of pregnant women in retaining their pregnancy till full term.



Maritime pine extract is a good source of antioxidants and is beneficial in many diseases, including maintenance of reproductive health. The pine extract is available in India also. It is quite normal and desirable for the progesterone level to rise during pregnancy, and hence consumption of the cow's colostrum may be beneficial during pregnancy as it is rich in progesterone and hence maintains progesterone level in the blood.

Unani Management of Infertility

Ilaj Bil Ghiza (Dietotherapy): Time and again, Unani has stressed the importance of healthy and nutritious eating in dealing with infertility. The food that one eats can play a pivotal role in

improving the quantity as well as the quality of the sperms and the eggs. With healthy eating, one also needs to lead a more relaxed and active life. Meditation, mild to moderate exercise and physical activities also work wonders to restore the hormonal balance. In general, walnuts, green leafy vegetables, salmon, oysters, raspberries, blueberries, eggs, wheat, flax seeds are known to improve the condition of infertility in both the sexes.

For men, citrus fruits, garlic, pumpkin seeds, tomatoes, carrots, berries, red peppers contribute significantly to deal with infertility and related problems. For women, the fertility boosting food options include eggs, milk, yam, nuts, and lean meat and poultry. One is also expected to avoid or reduce the intake of coffee, alcohol, processed foods, saturated and trans fats, simple carbohydrates, soy products, tofu, fish with a high mercury content.

Ilaj Bil Dawa or Pharmacotherapy: The use of Unani medicines (comprising of herbal concoctions and formulations) has been pathbreaking in dealing with a myriad of fertility problems including low libido, sperm and egg mortality and morphology, enhancing the sperm count. Some of the herbs often used in treating infertility include *Withania somnifera* (Ashwagandha), *Nigella sativa* (black cumin), *Sida cordifolia* (bala), *Asparagus racemosus* (shatavari), and *Tribulus terrestris* (gokshura).

Ilaj Bil Tadbeer or Regimental Therapy: Elevated levels of toxins in the body can immensely interfere with the fertility in both men and women. Ilaj Bil Tadbeer is a detoxification process that goes a long way to cleanse the body of the harmful toxins.

There are many Unani medicines especially formulated for infertility and if used under the guidance of a qualified and well experienced hakim, one can get good amount of benefit. All medicines are available with the retailer dealing with Unani medicines. However, the use of these medicines should be strictly under the medical supervision only.

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MandukaParni: A Samurai against Mental Stress

Chaithrika Hegade and Vibha S

If you or someone you know is trying to get pregnant, you may have heard well-meaning advice like, "Just relax, and it will happen!" But the truth is a bit more complex. Whether stress itself can make getting pregnant difficult is still a matter of debate. What is definitely known, however, is that there are stress-related factors that can make it harder to conceive!

Infertility is often a silent struggle. Patients who are struggling to conceive report feelings of depression, anxiety, isolation, and loss of control. Depression levels in patients with infertility have been compared with patients who have been diagnosed with cancer. It is estimated that 1 in 8 couples (or 12% of married women) have trouble getting pregnant or sustaining a pregnancy. Despite the prevalence of infertility, the majority of infertile women do not share their story with family or friends, thus increasing their psychological vulnerability. The inability to reproduce naturally can cause feelings of



shame, guilt, and low self-esteem. These negative feelings may lead to varying degrees of depression, anxiety, distress, and a poor quality of life.

Stress, Lifestyle Factors and Infertility

Manaswini, an enthusiastic married woman in her early thirties had a high profile MNC job with work pressures that led to much stress. She had been trying to have a baby for 2 years without any success. It's only when she quit her job finally after consulting an Ayurvedic physician that she could conceive naturally within three months.

It's not easy to tease out all the reasons why some couples seem to conceive easily and quickly while others have much more trouble. But research suggests that stress may be one factor that can affect the conception math. Stress can push people toward unhealthy behaviors that have been proven to impact fertility.

Is your Stress making you Infertile?

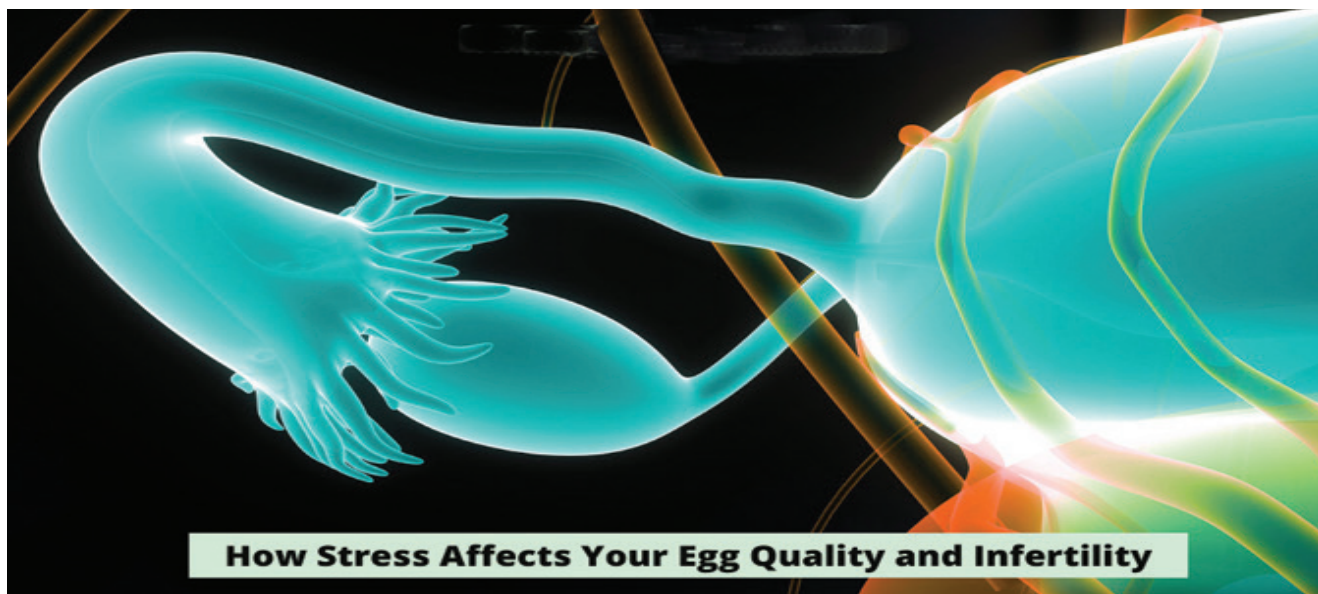
Several recent studies have also found links between the women's levels of day-to-day stress and lowered chances of pregnancy. Wherever you go through a lot of stress, the body recognizes the situation in no time and starts activating a defense mechanism against it. This is majorly manifested as an increase in the levels of certain hormones like cortisol. This elevated production can become a major cause of infertility in a woman. Cortisol even can disfigure the relay of information from the brain and ovaries. Thus, the whole process of ovulation goes for a toss. Hence, there is a reduced quantity of eggs that are released and the quality of it is also enough to cause any kind of pregnancy.

Moreover, during the time of stress, it becomes difficult to get aroused or have any feeling as such. Since the physical intimacy becomes lesser, there are lesser chances of getting pregnant as well. Stress can have an impact on the cognitive behavior of a person as well. Studies have suggested that women with problems related to it have more chances of becoming infertile in the long run.

Stress and anxiety are common in all fields, across all age groups and genders, and socio-economic statuses. The current times demand a break-neck speed of things which leads to such huge taxing efforts on the brain that the brain health is plummeting down steeply and is prone to premature wear and tear. The situation is so rampant that the mental stress and anxiety have become the top contenders to become the foremost diseases to affect the current generation and do not shy away from becoming a global pandemic with their vice-like grip over the entire globe.

Mild-moderate levels of anxiety are remotely harmful, or rather stimulating and helpful in achieving the goals. But when this exceeds the threshold, the brain and the entire nervous system is left to face a grave situation of declining health. Hence, it is crucial to get aware about the methods, modalities, means and drugs which help in nourishing the brain and the nervous system.

Here comes a medicinal plant to the rescue of Manaswini and others like her who suffer from the same disorder. This plant is called "Mandukaparni" or "Brahmi" in Sanskrit. Botanically it is identified as *Centella asiatica*, which belongs to the family Apiaceae (coriander family). In Kannada it is called "Ondelaga." In Tamil it is known as "Vellarai". In Telugu it is called "Saraswati aaku" and in Malayalam it is known by the name "Mutthal".





How does it look like?

It is a trailing herb. Stem is glabrous, green in colour and rooting at the nodes. Leaves are orbicular to reniform in shape. Margins are dentate (tooth like edges). Flowers are pinkish white in colour. The very name “Mandukaparni” reflects its morphological features.

Manduka=frog; parni=leaf

The leaves sprout from the nodes in a hopping manner and the hop distance is approximately equal to that of the hop of a frog!

Where does it grow?

The plant occurs in marshy places throughout the country. It grows in moist, loose, sandy loam and clay soil. It thrives best in the monsoon period. Just as the frogs love to inhabit marshy lands, similar is the case with this herb.

Sign of doctrine or LokaPurushaSaamyaVada

The doctrine of signature states that the herbs resembling various parts of the body can be used to manage the ailments affecting those body parts. The same concept was told in Ayurveda by our Acharyas long ago by stating- “*PurushoAyamLokaSamitaba*”. If we observe the leaf of Mandukaparni, it resembles the shape of the human brain. The veins radiating from the centre looks like the gyri of brain. Because of the

similarity of this herb with the human brain, it is used in enhancing the functions of brain and also in the psychological disorders like anxiety, epilepsy, mania, depression etc.

Properties of Mandukaparni

Mandukaparni is primarily bitter in taste; but has secondary tastes like astringent and sweet. It is light for digestion, cold in potency and balances all the three doshas. The most unique property that it possesses is its action on the brain. Hence, it is very rightly called “Adityakantaa”. It means that which gives brightness to the mind like the Sun. The blend of Mandukaparni and Chotakulpha (*Trichodesma indicum* - Adhapuspi, Indian Borage) is extraordinary to reduce female sterility.

Mandukaparni and Stress

In Ayurveda, Charaka has mentioned four MedhyaRasayanas. MedhyaRasayanas improve the cognitive function, memory, intelligence, creativity, and learning skills. They help in three vital aspects of functioning of the brain.

- **Acquisition:** it is the ability to learn new things
- **Retention:** It is the ability of an individual to retain the knowledge of his learning
- **Recollection:** It is the ability to recall and execute the knowledge whenever required. It is also called the memory power.

Mandukaparni is one among the MedhyaRasayanas. Charaka has mentioned that the juice extracted from the whole plant is used as MedhyaRasayana. Along with its action on cognitive function and increasing the memory power, it also helps to reduce the anxiety, brings calmness and induces sleep because of its VataharaGuna (reduces the Vata dosha, which is responsible for restlessness, anxiety, loss of sleep etc).

Other uses of Mandukaparni

Helps in relieving many skin diseases like fungal infection of skin and itching, improves the skin quality as it is a skin tonic, helps in faster healing of wounds, Bleeding disorders like nasal bleeding and excessive menstruation, Diabetes, Fever, Cough, Asthma, Loss of taste, Jaundice, It improves the physical strength as well, Good for heart muscles (cardio-protective), Improves the voice quality and it is a rejuvenative, which slows down the ageing process.

Mandukaparni in the form of Food

The leaves of Mandukaparni can be used in the preparation of: Tambuli, Chutney, Mandukaparni juice, Mandukaparni infusion/ tea and leaves can be optionally added to curries or stews in combination with other vegetables. It helps to increase the digestive power by stimulating the liver enzymes, while also increasing the appetite.

When is it ideal to consume Mandukaparni?

Since it is a major Rasayana according to Ayurvedic science, the ideal time to start consuming this herb is right from the time of attainment of adulthood till the completion of middle age. By doing so on a regular basis, the brain's health is enhanced as well as the degeneration is kept at bay. It is always better to start any Rasayana from a younger age than in the elderly age group when there would already be irreparable damages and taking any amounts of Rasayana would only be futile. Interestingly, this particular herb can be consumed even earlier than adulthood. That is, right from the childhood as it helps in the brain development in appropriate terms both qualitatively and quantitatively.

(DISCLAIMER: Usage of only Madukaparni

does not guarantee the complete cure of the anxiety related disorders and mental stress. It is better to consult a medical practitioner for your symptoms).

Who should not regularly use Mandukaparni?

- longstanding liver disorders
- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Sensitive individuals prone to allergies

Though stress-related disorders and anxiety are ubiquitous and are the harbingers of mental morbidity, all is not lost as we have herbs like Mandukaparni which help in making each person a ManasWINi...winning over the Manas (mind)!

What Else You Can Do

If you've been trying to have a baby for a while or just want to ramp up your chances, research suggests these actions might help:

- **Exercise for "just right" amount.** Physical activity both lowers stress and boosts fertility.
- **Watch your weight.** One downfall of stress is a tendency to eat for emotional comfort. Being overweight or obese makes it harder to get or stay pregnant.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** When you are stressed, it's tempting to load up on processed, sugary foods. But women who follow a sattvik diet rich in whole grains and other nutrients are more likely to conceive than those who eat a high-fat, heavily processed diet, according to one study.
- **Seek professional advice:** You are the best person to know your body. When you think everything is getting out of control, it is best to seek a professional's advice on your fertility.

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Reproductive Healthcare and Nutrition



When most of us think of fertility treatment, we imagine sophisticated diagnostic testing, powerful medications, and high-tech procedures. Choosing certain foods and drinks as a way to influence the ability to become pregnant, sounds more like folktale wisdom than medical advice!

Men and women should understand that food what we eat plays a lead role and thereby can be the primary factor to be considered for their reproductive health and brings harmony in their happy married life.

All-important nutrients in a regular meal should reduce the risk factors affecting the reproductive health of both men and women. Since the lifestyle disorders are found to be the most common factor for the infertility conditions, it is a prior concern for the health professionals to monitor the diet pattern and eating behaviours. The food what we eat not only favors the physiological conditions but also mental wellness.

Stress induced discomforts nowadays are causing major challenge in treating patients suffering from weak reproductive health. But the knowledge on the nutritional facts of foods to eradicate the food-induced stress problems can very well assist in improving the reproductive health care of any individual.

While there are many factors that may contribute to reproductive health in both males and females including age, genetics, hormonal disorders, anatomy of reproductive organs and certain chronic diseases, research is ongoing regarding the potential impact diet may have on pregnancy outcomes and the ability to conceive.



The best combination of nutrients like zinc, iron, potassium, folic acid, magnesium, vitamin A, B, C, D, E and K, the high quality protein along with some chemical components of food like arginine, carnitine, quercetin, omega-3 fatty acids, dietary nitrates, lycopene etc. in a daily meal are necessarily important while promoting for better reproductive health and care.

Health Tips

- Restrict too much of coffee and tea. Start taking fruit juices and butter milk regularly.
- Do some moderate physical exercises daily
- Manage your stress with healthy food intake
- Avoid over eating/ starvation during stress
- Say big NO to processed/salty foods or packed food items
- Keep yourself hydrated
- Include coloured fruits and vegetables loaded with antioxidants
- Select dry fruits and nuts in your regular meal
- Take dairy products
- Use blended vegetable oil
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Maintain healthy body weight always
- Say no to faulty food habits/ fried foods
- Energize your positive attitude
- Reduce risk factors of depression and anxiety
- Take happy meals together with your loved ones
- Never skip meals

- Avoid simple sugars. Include complex carbohydrates/ fibre in your meals
- Follow medical advices if you are suffering from any hormonal imbalances. Do not give up routine medical checkup.
- Never ignore the signs and symptoms shown by reproductive organs
- Try to avoid any deficiency conditions or identify them as early as possible to follow advises from health experts

Recipes for Reproductive Health

- Pomegranate juice mixed with few orange rinds daily
- Try orange juice with few crushed mint leaves
- Have Badam (almond) milk shake once in a week
- Watermelon juice blended with lemon juice
- Sprinkle sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds and walnuts in dosa batter or roti dough
- Start the breakfast meal with avocado / peanut butter as bread spreads
- A fistful of dry fruits daily
- Use spinach or drumstick leaves in combination with green gram dhal
- Take fortified or enriched snack bar at least once in a week
- Use whole grains (multi grain bread/ brown rice/ brown rice flakes) in daily meal instead of refined flour
- Practice intake of sprouts in between the meals



- Eat a banana before your bed time
- Take a walk in mild sunlight to improve vitamin D daily
- Use flax seed incorporated idli/ ragi dosa
- Try raitas with cucumber and carrot
- Always include two veggies in your lunch (beans/ green leafy vegetables/ lentils / carrot)
- Use jaggery instead of simple sugars
- Use urad dal in the form of gruel at least once in a week
- If your body weight is normal and not in the risk of obesity, can take few cheese slices in your sandwich
- Use crushed garlic and ginger in your veggies masala
- Try using sweet potatoes instead of potatoes in your favorite recipes
- Take veg salads along with any one of your main course every day

Enjoy these Snack Meals

Payasam: Boiled moong dhal ½ cup and Brown rice flakes ½ cup
 Allow them to boil with crushed jaggery (1 cup) and complete the procedure according to the favoring consistency. Sprinkle grated coconut (1tbsp) and elachi powder (1/2 tsp) into it. Sauté the cashew and raisins in little ghee and pour it on the mixture. Serve and enjoy.

Sprouts Salad: Prepare salad with any mixture of sprouts: (horse gram/ green gram), chopped cucumber, capsicum, tomatoes and onions, grated carrot and one tbsp peanuts, sprinkle salt and pepper; add one tsp of lemon juice; garnish with coriander leaves.

Smoothie: Prepare smoothie with crushed pomegranate seeds, raw beetroot juice, banana in one glass of milk using blender. Sprinkle crushed pumpkin seeds on top. Add honey if so preferred for sweet taste.

Healthy Falooda: Soaked basil seeds (2 tbsp), crushed dry fruits and nuts (2 tbsp), saffron few strands, diced apple, pineapple, banana, strawberries (as per choice), cooked vermicelli (2tbsp), sweetened milk (with honey) one glass, cooked oats (1tbsp), prepare it as per your choice of serving style and serve it chill.

Greens in variety: Try taking drumstick leaves cooked along with bottle gourd and moong dal. Serve them after sautéing with little jeera, mustard seeds, hing and curry leaves in little gingelly oil. Add grated coconut for taste.

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PCOS: Are you Ignoring it??



Padmasaritha Reddy

Experts say most women ignore the common symptoms of PCOS and turn to a doctor only when they face trouble conceiving. The incidence of the condition has been increasing every year, yet many women do not think that it may be PCOS even when they notice symptoms. They simply attribute it to their lifestyle.

PCOS does arise out of poor lifestyle habits but it has adverse effects and should be treated. Since it is not life-threatening, most women do not care enough about it.

PCOS symptoms might not traumatize you initially, but if you keep ignoring the signs, they will come back to haunt your health.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder in reproductive women. It is a common

diagnosis in women presenting with infertility. Remember, PCOS is a syndrome, not a disease. And it is a lifelong condition that continues far beyond childbearing years.

PCOS occurs due to the development of cysts near the ovaries. Excessive release of the hormone testosterone in the body is one of the reasons for the imbalance. Ovaries may develop fluid-like structures called follicles, which later develop as cysts that might result in their inability to produce eggs. In Ayurveda it can be correlated with **Artava Kshaya**.

Symptoms

- Irregular and delayed periods or no periods because of lack of ovulation
- Excess facial hair (hirsutism), acne, thinning scalp hair because of higher levels of male hormones
- Multiple small cysts on the ovaries seen in an ultrasound.

Causes

- Obesity (excess weight) due to an unhealthy diet and lack of physical exercise
- Family history: women whose mother or sister have PCOS or Type 2 diabetes are more likely to develop PCOS
- Insulin resistance (Type 2 diabetes)

It may lead to:

- Heavy and painful periods
- Metabolic issues such as diabetes, gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy), heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke
- Cancer of the uterus
- Depression and anxiety (though the connection is not fully understood)
- Infertility

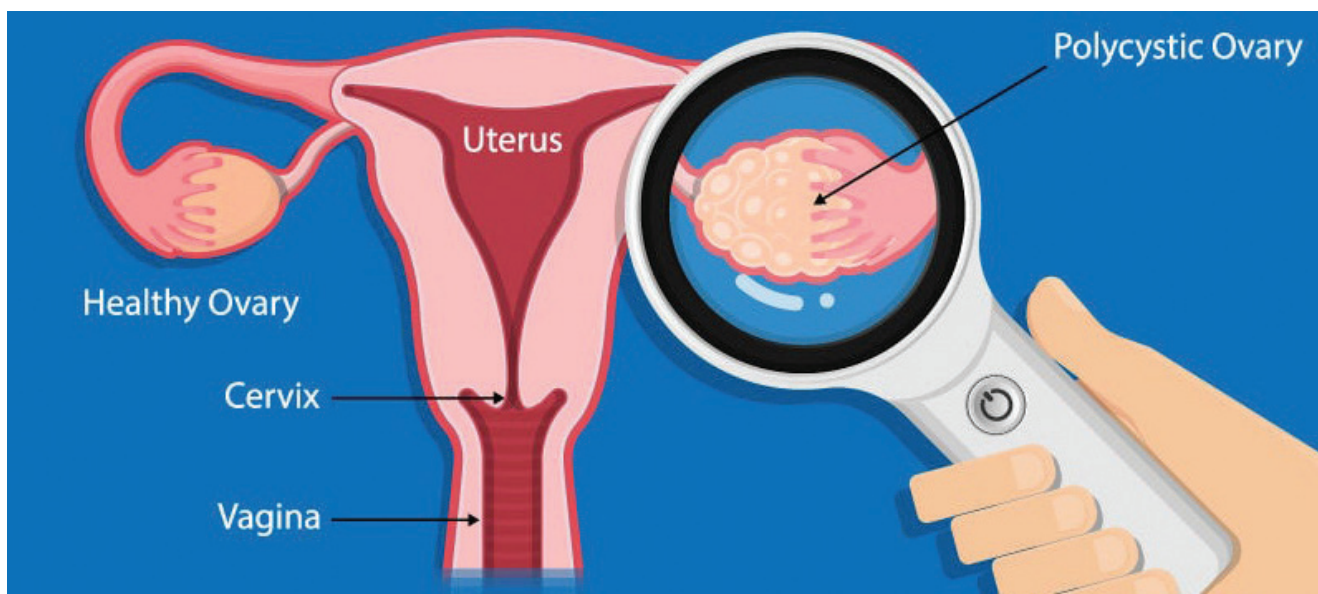
Ayurvedic Management of PCOS

Although PCOS is fairly common, it has no sure-fire cure in mainstream allopathic medicine, but Ayurveda can help alleviate PCOS symptoms in a big way. In modern medicine PCOS is treated by hormonal

therapy, while Ayurvedic treatment of PCOS aims at treating the root cause i.e., correction of the ama dosha by correcting the metabolism. Two types of treatment have been advised in Ayurveda for Artava kshaya condition: Samshodhana (cleansing procedures) and Samshamana (disease pacifying) treatment.

Amongst Samshodhana treatment, Panchkarma procedures like Vamana (emesis) and Virechana (purgation) using medicated drugs are beneficial. These Panchkarma procedures help in cleansing, detoxification and correcting the hormonal imbalance by improving the metabolism. The regularization of Apana vata functioning is essential as well. Bastis (enemas) and Uttara Vastis are effective treatments for gynecological disorders. They help to purify and clear the Aartava Vaha Srotas (the channels that supply to the female reproductive system), pacify vitiated Apana vayu and improve follicular maturity and correct the menstrual cycle.

Yoga and meditation are very important for the treatment of PCOS. Yoga also helps in weight loss, relieves stress and improves blood circulation to the ovaries thus naturally curing the PCOS. Some of the ideal yoga postures for this condition include Sarvangasana, Matyasana, Martkasan, Tittaliasana, Bhujangasana and Shavasana. A combination of herbs, therapies and a healthy lifestyle is needed to improve the condition of PCOS. Treatment is selected according to the age and condition of the patient.



Success Story of a PCOS patient

A female patient aged about 35 years, weight- 71kg, came to my OPD with a complaint of irregular cycles and excessive bleeding during her menstrual cycles since 11years. She was completely stressed out, with acne pigmentation over the face, heavy hair fall and low self-esteem. Earlier, she had tried different modalities of treatment, but could not get expected results.

As part of her Ayurvedic treatment, in the first month, the initial line of treatment was directed to reduce her bleeding, so medications along with specific diet, regimen and few yogasanas were advised, and her bleeding reduced by 40%. To remove toxins, to reduce inflammatory changes and to stabilize her pitta and vata, Virechana and Picha vasti was given in next cycle, during which, she lost 4kgs weight.

Her acne reduced comparatively and there were visible signs of improved mood and reduced anxiety and stress and her bleeding was normalized in the immediate cycle.

Rejuvenating therapy was added, along with external hair applications, which resulted in reduction in her hair fall too. End of it, patient was so satisfied with the treatment and the tailored lifestyle changes that made her come out of stress and all the main symptoms. Needless to say, by properly understanding the amount of dosha and stage of the disease, PCOS can be better managed with Ayurveda.

Ayurvedic Herbs for PCOS

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*) : Shatavari has lots of plant based estrogens; something very beneficial for women with PCOS, since their levels of estrogen are low and testosterone are high. It is helpful in bringing more regularity in menstrual cycles, and can pretty much revitalise the reproductive system. It reduces the levels of insulin as well.

Triphala : Triphala pacifies all the 3 doshas, which can strengthen and refresh the body and mind. It benefits women with PCOS by detoxifying their bodies and reducing inflammation and is great for helping the body restore hormonal balance. As a result, the menstrual



cycle regulates and the various PCOS symptoms like weight gain and fatigue start to diminish.

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) : Guduchi reduces inflammation in the tissues, which is what causes PCOS in the first place. This herb also lowers the body's insulin resistance and improves metabolism. This herb is perhaps one of the most valuable natural remedies for PCOS.

Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) : Fennel seeds (saunf) are a popular health supplement and highly effective Ayurvedic medicine for PCOS. Just like shatavari, they also have lots of phytoestrogens, thus bringing estrogen levels back up to normal. This works to improve metabolic activity, reduce inflammation and lower insulin levels. The best part is that fennel seeds not only regularise the menstrual cycle, but are also super effective in relieving the painful cramps that accompany periods.

The Ayurvedic treatment for PCOS is a cost-effective way of treatment without any side effects.

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Yoga for PCOS

Geeta Singh

It has been observed that Yoga for PCOS can help open up the pelvic area and also release deeply stored stress and promote relaxation of the mind and body. By practicing these asanas regularly, women can de-stress and facilitate detoxification of their body.

Certain Yogasanas helps tone up the whole reproductive system. Stretching asanaa such as Surya Namaskar, Ustrasana, Ardhakati chakrasana, Chakrasana and Sethubandhasana promote internal muscle movement supplying ample oxygen and repair and rejuvenate the cells and tissues. These intense and demanding asanas helps burn more calories and aid in weight management.

Twisting and compressing Asanas such as Dhanurasana, Pavanamuktasana, Badhakonasana, Ardhamatsendrasana, Marchyasana, Bhardwajasana and Vajrasana stimulate the ovaries and help in hormonal balance. These asanas are ideal for women to help them develop a regular and healthy menstrual cycle.

Restorative and relaxing asanas like Titaliasana, Vajrasana along with Pranayama and meditation, will relax the mind, reduces stress hormones, offer emotional strength and keep hormones in balance.



Let's take a detailed look at some of the effective asanas below:

Padma Sadhana : More popularly known as the lotus meditation, this asana promotes deep relaxation, making it perfect for yoga for PCOS. The entire yoga sequence consists of a set of asanas: For the first 10 minutes, do the following asanas:

- For body rotation, sit in a half-lotus posture and rotate your body clockwise and anticlockwise, four times in each direction.
- Lie down on the floor on your stomach to transition to Makarasana known as the crocodile pose where your head is raised, and your feet are perpendicular to the ground. This asana is for relaxation.
- Gradually transition to the Ardha shalabhasana by lifting your feet off the floor, one by one. Move on to the Purna shalabhasana by placing your palms under the pelvis and lifting both your limbs off the floor.



- It is time now for the Bhujangasana where you keep both your hands near the shoulders and slowly bend back backwards. The navel should remain on the floor, and your head should look up.
- Transition to the Viprit Salabhasana keeping your stomach on the ground and lifting both your hands and legs off the floor.
- Now hold both your feet hands making a bow shape with your body to perform the Dhanurasana. These asanas are to be followed by 5 minutes of anulom vilom, meditation and pranayama.

Anulom Vilom Pranayama : It is a controlled breathing exercise that can help in deep relaxation and eliminate certain harmful toxins from the body. It enables the mind to destress the body and ensures improved functioning of the heart.

- Sit down in padmasana, with your eyes closed, and let your hands rest on your knees.
- Block your right nose with your right thumb, and then slowly inhale through the left nostril.
- Gradually remove your thumb from your right nostril and then exhale. While exhaling, block your left nostril with your middle finger and then inhale with your right nostril
- Repeat this process for 15 minutes for maximum benefit. Keep your mind focused on your breathing.

Ardhamatsyendra : Regular practice of this asana improves pelvic and waist circulation. It also helps in preventing menstrual disorders and is good for reproductive organs. It helps ease out any stiffness and improves spine flexibility.

- Begin by sitting on the floor with your legs stretched out straight in front of you and your spine erect. Bending both your knees, bring your knees to the chest. Place your left heel under your right hip (the right hip can be slightly raised from the ground) and take the right leg over the left leg, placing the right feet on the left side of the left knee.
- Inhale, pulling the abdomen in straightening the spine. Exhale and twist to the right. Place the right hand behind you on the floor for support and place your left hand across your right leg bringing your armpit in line with your knee and try to hold your right foot. Look over your right shoulder. Hold for 30 to 60 seconds. With every exhale, try to get deeper into the twist.
- To get out the pose, first release the hands and then the legs. Repeat on the other side.

Suptabaddhakonasana : This is the reclining butterfly pose that has proven beneficial as yoga for PCOS. It opens up the pelvic area and promotes relaxation of the body.

- Lie down on your back and try to relax.
- Pull your legs close together in a butterfly position.
- Hold your feet in place together with your hands, and try to pull it as close to your body.
- You can add a cushion under your hip to help support your posture during the asana. Lie in this position for 5 minutes, take a break, and then repeat.

Bharaddvajasana : This is a seated spinal twist that helps PCOS patients.

- Sit on the mat with legs stretched straight in front. Place the palms on the floor on both side of hips and the fingers indicating the feet. Keep your back erect, this is called Dandasana.
- Bend the knees, move the legs back and bring both feet to the right alongside the hips.
- Rest the buttocks on the floor , rotate the torso about 45 degrees to the left, keep your right arm straight and place the right palm on the outer side of the left thigh near the left knee. Place in your right hand underneath the left knee so that your right palm is touching the floor.
- Exhale, bring the left arm from the shoulder behind the back, bend the left elbow and with the left hand clasp the right upper arm above the right elbow.
- Turn the neck to the right and look over the right shoulder.
- Hold this posture from half a minute to one minute with deep breathing.
- Now release the posture by untwisting and repeat the same sequence on the other side and hold the posture for equal length of time.



- Shavasana** : The corpse pose, or Shavasana, can help in relaxing the mind and keeping cortisol levels in check. Since stress is one of the leading causes of PCOS, yoga for PCOS can help in de-stressing.
- Lie down flat on your back. Place both your hands on either side of your body with palms facing up.

- Close your eyes and lie still. Breathe slowly and as deeply as possible through your nostrils.
- Empty your mind and focus on your breathing. Try to lie in that position for at least 10 minutes.

Bhujangasana : Also known as the cobra pose, this asana helps in promoting flexibility in the body and destressing the system.

- Lie down on your chest with your elbows close to your body, palms facing down.
- On an inhalation, slowly straighten your arms to lift your chest off the floor and keep reclining back. Your navel should be touching the floor.
- Hold the posture for 15-30 seconds and then gradually exhale and come back down.

Surya Namaskar : Known for improving the functioning of your system, this is one of the oldest asanas in the book.

- Face the morning sun standing in a prayer pose.
- Slowly stretch your folded hands backwards in a reclining posture and inhale.
- Now exhale and bring your hands forward, bend your knees and place your hands on your feet.
- Bend your right knee and stretch the right leg behind while placing your left leg forward in an athlete position. Look up.
- Exhale and raise your hip and tailbone in the air to make an inverted V with your body.
- Breathe in and get in position to launch into cobra pose by placing your hands near your shoulders and raising your buttock
- Launch into the cobra pose by lifting your chest and bending backwards.
- Slowly now rewind your steps and come back to the position you started in
- Repeat 5 times.

These are few of the most effective asanas to help you fight PCOS.

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G Shital

It was year 2008 just when I had just started practicing Ayurveda. Most of the time I needed to show more patience, since mine was pure Ayurveda practice in a semi-urban area of Maharashtra state where people were not much aware about Ayurvedic treatment and its benefits to humankind. Hence, at times, it used to be a long wait for patients who were willing to undergo pure Ayurveda treatment. I could hardly get 2 or 3 such patients in a month's time and that too they came after trying all modern way of treatments including usage of various pain killers or recommended for surgeries. One day, one young married lady approached me with a huge medical file. I came to know that she was facing recurrent pregnancy loss which was diagnosed as "secondary infertility with uterine fibroid". She was consuming various hormonal tablets, antibiotics, painkillers, steroids etc as prescribed by the modern system. However, later when she was suggested surgery for fibroid, she hesitated to undergo surgery and thought of Ayurveda medicine as her final choice. As always, Ayurveda medicine did its magic and till today she remembers me with lots of love and gratitude.

What is a Fibroid?

Fibroid is an abnormal noncancerous growth in or on the walls of the uterus. In this growth, smooth muscle cells and connective tissue are involved. A lady may have one or multiple fibroids, having size as small as an apple seed to as big as a grapefruit or some times larger than this. These are more common from the age of 30 years to the stage of menopause.

Types of Fibroid

According to the site, fibroids are classified into three types:

- Subserosal fibroids: Most commonly grows on the outside of the uterus.
- Intramural fibroids: These grow inside the muscular wall of the uterus.
- Submucosal fibroids: These grow into the open space inside the uterus. Some fibroids have a stalk that attaches to the uterus.

What invites a fibroid in female body?

Medically no one knows exactly why and how the fibroid develops. Its development may be linked

with estrogen level, as they are developed during child bearing age and shrinks during menopause when estrogen level is low. Family history also is one of the reasons, if a mother has fibroid uterus, then her daughter is on risk of this. According to some researches, increased intake of junk food, red meat, caffeine is associated with increased risk of fibroids. Obesity and sedentary, stressful lifestyle is another important risk factor. Importing western life style is an important cause for increasing incidences of fibroids, which is evident during these two decades.

How does one can suspect she has Fibroid?

Most of the times, fibroids remain symptomless or do not show noticeable symptoms. Intensity of symptoms depends on number of fibroids present in uterus as well their size and site. Some of them are as follows:

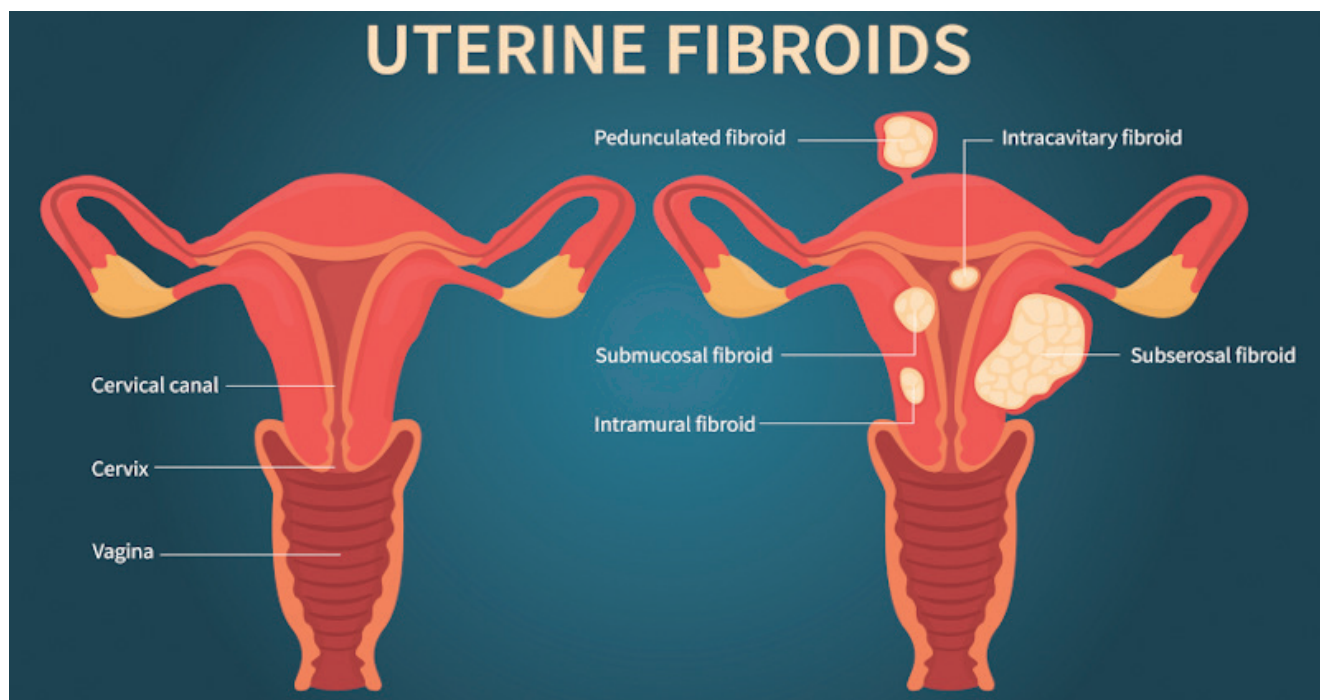
- Heavy bleeding during menses (menorrhagia), leads to anaemia (reduced haemoglobin in blood)
- Painful menstrual cycles (dysmenorrhea)
- Lower backache or leg pain
- Constipation
- Frequent urination
- Pain during intercourse (dyspareunia)

How is it Diagnosed?

- **Pelvic examination:** It is used to check the condition, size and shape of uterus; this gives the primary idea of fibroid.
- **Ultrasound scans:** Scanning over the abdomen or by inserting a small ultrasound probe into the vagina, both methods may be necessary to detect fibroids.
- **MRI Scans:** To determine exact size, site and number of fibroids.
- **Hysteroscopy:** To examine and detect fibroids present in the inner cavity of uterus.
- **Laparoscopy:** It is useful to examine and detect fibroids present outside of the uterus.

Do Fibroids cause Infertility?

Whether fibroid is a cause for infertility or not is a debatable factor. Some sources suggest removing fibroids to improve rate of conception, some say to continue pregnancy with fibroid. Site of fibroid also influences the rate of conception, for example Submucosal fibroid may create problems in conception and completion of pregnancy. Patient may face repeated abortions. Pregnancy with fibroid may need caesarean section. Small fibroids may not cause infertility, but multiple and larger fibroids might hamper conception create repeated abortions.





How Ayurveda can help in Infertility associated with fibroids?

Ayurveda is Science of life; it always talks about being healthy rather than treating illness. In case of progeny, this science is very conscious, scientifically explains about necessary factors and procedures of formation of foetus, as well dos and don'ts for both the partners. Ayurveda considers 4 factors for successful pregnancy;

- Ritu- ovulatory phase
- Kshetra- uterus (site for fibroids)
- Ambu- Nourishment
- Beeja- Healthy seeds i.e ovum and sperm.

If any one of the above factors gets disturbed, it will cause infertility. Even though uterine fibroid is a recently known disease, in Ayurveda there are some pathological conditions explained which are exactly similar to this, named as Granthi and treated like Garbhashaygat Granthi. Ayurvedic treatment is a blend of Shaman (medication), Panchkarma (biological purification) and Rasayana (rejuvenator).

For these cases, combination of Panchkarma and Rasayana works excellent. In cases of fibroid uterus, Veerechana (medicated purgation) gives satisfactory results. As Ayurveda is a personalised system of medicine, use of medicine differs from person to

person, and according to their conditions. Some of them are: Kanchanar Guggul, Chandra Prabha Vati, Gokshuradi Guggul and Varunadi Kwatha. Rasayana is a necessary part of treatment to conceive and to have healthy progeny. Phalaghrita, Shatavari Kalpa, Garbhapal rasa can be used.

Lifestyle changes such as regular exercise, healthy diet and maintaining moderate weight may help to regularise menstrual cycles as well maintain correct levels of estrogen, and eventually this may help reduce fibroids.

In Ayurveda a beautiful concept is explained called “BeejaSanskara” which means purification of beeja before conception and if every couple who wants to have children undergo this sanskara, no one will suffer from “infertility with fibroid uterus”.

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Varmam Tradition for Infertility

Sri Ramesh Babu



Infertility is a grave thought that haunts people in the current generation. Can you imagine, in the older times, mostly 80% of the women would conceive easily without much problems and only a few would not, if we take in a family of say 5 to 6 children. The rate of childlessness was very meagre. Now in the current scenario, there are lots of IVF centers and procedures followed to handle this problem. The reason for this is the complete change in lifestyle, working life imbalance, the technology advancement.

In modern days, early puberty, early menopause are problems due to the hampered lifestyle such as sleeping at odd hours, no play and sitting for long hours hooked on to computers or television, stressful living and bad eating habits. The lifestyle has taken a wide detour from what it used to be earlier. Dress sense, dress code, food habits, sleeping habits, menstrual care everything has taken a vast deviation from the way it is actually supposed to be.

Gynecological disorders have been found as one of the major factors affecting the reproductive system. The grave one being the PCOS, which has impact from lifestyle changes amongst women. PCOS is a multisystem disorder majorly affecting the metabolism, hormonal balance, BMI, insulin resistance, infertility, anxiety disorders and many more.

I always like to go back to tradition and observe what exactly is causing these disturbances and

ultimately arrive at the conclusion that giving up our tradition most of the times has been the reason for several problems that we are facing in the modern times. This explains that the tradition had cultural practices that were impacting the way our body functions and following it kept us in good health.

Before modernization took a great leap, women would have a life full of activities from morning till night and during this period the amount of exercise given to the whole body was enormous and each inch of the body was completely exercised with various household work, work in the fields and taking care of younger and older people at home. This used to have varied types of effects on the complete system of the body. The metabolism used to be in excellent condition. Heeled footwear again leads to tilted pelvic bone which pushes the uterus from its location and also reduces the space for the child growth after fertilization of the egg.

Resting during the cycles by staying away from the kitchen and from people was a way of ensuring that lack of facilities such as toilets and sanitary methods should not create hindrance and also at the same time, this was the only time when the lady of the house would get to rest from morning till night without having to worry about doing things for everyone. The rest would ensure that there is no aggravation of the heat in the body since during the

menstrual cycle, ladies are bound to have an excess heat due to which back pain, abdominal cramps and other such pains occur. When it is treated with healthy food and rest, it gets healed and prepares the womb by making it fertile. The food given during these times and also the food given at the time of attaining puberty till child birth strengthens the uterus, hips and bones.

Having castor oil once in 15 days in the early morning on empty stomach helps in keeping constipation at bay. This is to improve metabolism and also keep the heats in the stomach and lower abdomen without interfering with each other.

Barren means infertile. As per the traditional science, there is nothing called barren land. A female is the representation of land (earth) and it can never be barren (infertile). The environment might have made it dry or not suitable for rearing all kinds of plants, but specific plants definitely do grow just like in deserts or in marshy places, each place has a different kind of flora. Similarly, women have to be nurtured to bring out the beauty of child conception and birth.

There is evidence from a tribe called Himba, in Namibia in South Africa, where the date of childbirth is also fixed at the time the thought of the child is born in the mother's mind. As per the panchabhootha



or five primordial elements principle, child birth happens from the time the thought of having a child pops in the mind of the couple.

There are 5 elements involved in the making of the child. We call it as generative cycle.

1. First birth of the child happens when the mind, symbolizing the ether or space element initiates the thought of having the child.
2. Air element changes the breath to further the process.
3. Fire element activates and enhances the body temperature.
4. Water element is formed when the temperature is converted to sweat (sperm creation).
5. This water element falls in the earth element and creation is initiated in the physical form (fertilization).

The above is a very natural process and when it happens the way it has to, then infertility is something which cannot be observed anywhere unless in rare cases. Intimacy among couples, quality time spent with family have all become a complete possibility only based on the deliverables at work. More than life, now we see humans living to work and completing their financial goals than living for themselves.

Varmam for Infertility

Varmam locations are places in the body which

interconnects the physical body, mental body or the mind and the soul. Varmam **heal and defense system**. The path of subtle energy (prana) moving across the body to perform routine functions is called **Saram**. The subtle energy (prana) is reserved at certain places in the body known as **Varmam Adangal (energy in silent mode/ reservoir)**.

Varmam activation helps the body to become strong by bringing it into its natural being and helps in the body to become **Kayakalpa (longevity of life)**.

The first important thing to follow would be to change the dress code. Clothes have to be worn on the navel and not below the navel. This helps in keeping intact the organs such as bladder, uterus in place. The dress keeps pushing the organ downward and leads to distention of bladder and uterus, giving space for cysts formation. When this is done, the Sadayantha Varmam / Kachchai Kaalam is stimulated and strengthens the reproductive system.

Fertility has to be enhanced both in men and women and should not be looked at as a problem only with women. For both of them, tying a wet cloth once in a while, around the body, from the navel till the lower abdomen is an excellent way to reduce the heat in the lower abdomen because this heat sometimes kills or weakens the sperm.



Men and women can both use loin cloth (langot) whenever comfortable to increase the fertility, potency and sperm count. In females, it helps in subfertility, menstrual problems, dysmenorrhea, and in handling menopause related disturbances.

Several varmam points surrounding the genitals are stimulated when the dress code is changed. These are varmam that internally help in premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, increasing sperm count, strengthening the sperm. A few varmam points that get stimulated are:

Valamburi Kaalam

Location

- Within 1 Irai on the lateral sides around the right side tip of the penis
- In between the Vallurumi and Vellurumi varmam point

Idamburi Kaalam

Location

- 1 Irai downwards on the lateral sides of the left side tip of the penis

Vallurumi, Vellurumi Varmam

Location

- On the sides of the nerve below the the Idamburi and Valamburi varmam points.
- Both sides of the penis / upper vagina

Naangutri / Narangutri Varmam

Location

- Next to the Vallurumi and Vellurmi varmam points
- 4 fb below the Ani varmam

Ani Varmam

Location

- 4 irai above the Narangutri varmam.

Aandhai Varmam

Location

- ½ irai above Ani varmam
- Situated on both sides of the lower abdomen

Moothira Kaalam

Location

- 4 FB below the navel

Kallidai Kaalam

Location

- 1 fb above the Valamburi and Idamburi Varmam
- Situated on the testis where sperms are secreted

Other Varmam locations that should be used include:

Sadayantha Varmam / Kachai Kaalam

Location

- Around the transverse abdominal in the form of a ring.

Unthi Adangal

Location

- Located at the center of the navel



Nema Varmam

Location

- On the center of the forehead

Thilartha Varmam

Location

- On the small groove at the junction of the eyebrows above the nasal bridge.
- At the junction of the frontal nasal suture and inter-nasal suture

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Male Infertility and Ayurveda

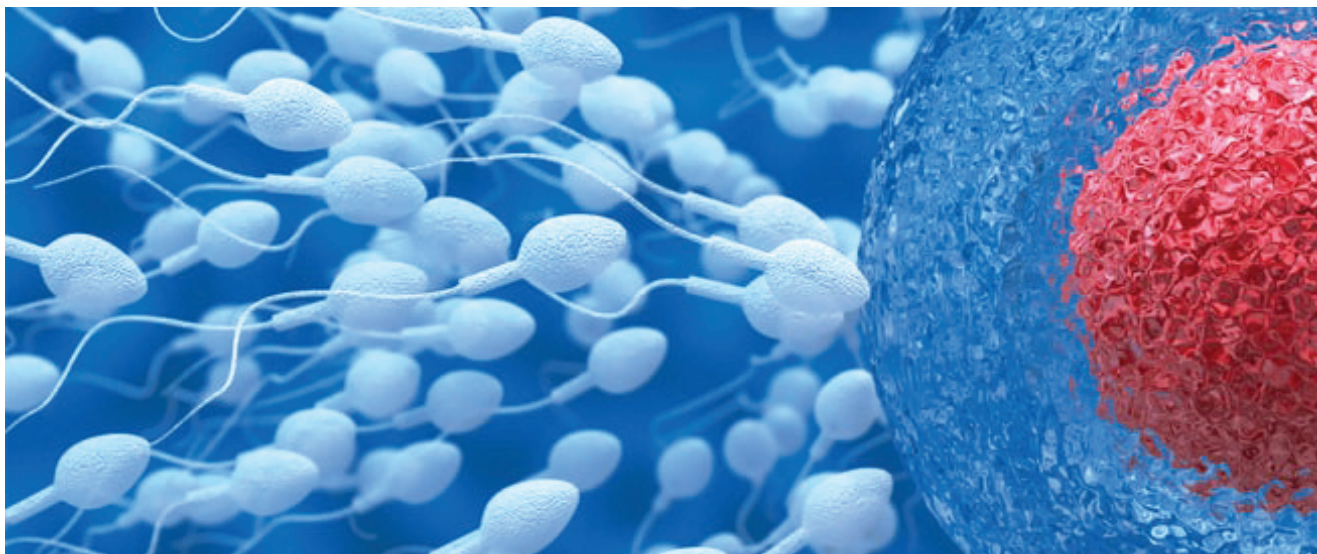
Narayan S Jadhav

Citing mostly as the embarrassing reasons, not many males gather up their guts to visit a doctor for their checkup. Now, for all those males, who are diagnosed to be infertile medically, DO NOT PANIC!! Our traditional roots hold in them an effective solution for most of their fertility related problems.

In Ayurveda, male infertility is called Shandhatva or Napunsaktva, it is the inability to sire a progeny by man. General health and lifestyle of a man affects his fertility, although modern science has made commendable advancements in identifying the causes but is still unable to put forth the treatment for the problem. Some common causes of infertility related to health and lifestyle are given in the table.

Common Causes of Male Infertility

Pre-testicular	Testicular	Post-testicular
Endocrine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gonadotropin deficiency - Obesity - Thyroid dysfunction - Hyperprolactinemia Psychosexual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Erectile dysfunction - Impotence Drugs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antihypertensive - Antipsychotics Genetic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 47 XXY - Y chromosome deletion - single gene mutations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immotile cilia (Kartagener) syndrome - Cryptorchidism - Infection (mumps orchitis) - Toxins: Drugs, smoking, radiation - Varicocele - Immunologic - Sertoli-cell-only Syndrome - Primary testicular failure - Oligoastheno-teratozoospermia 	Obstruction of efferent duct. Congenital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of Vas deferens (cystic fibrosis) - Young's syndrome Acquired infection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuberculosis, Gonorrhoea Surgical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Herniorrhaphy - Vasectomy Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ejaculatory failure - Retrograde ejaculation - Hypospadias - Bladder neck surgery



Alcohol and Drugs- for example: Anabolic steroids, cocaine, marijuana etc.

Emotional Stress- It may interfere with certain hormones needed to produce sperm.

Lifestyle generated disorders- Like obesity, diabetes etc. may cause hormone and other metabolic changes which reduce male fertility.

Electromagnetic radiation- Such like laptop, computers, cell phone, x-rays etc.

Malnutrition- Deficiencies in nutrients such as vitamin c, selenium, zinc and folate may contribute to infertility.

Environmental exposure-

Indoor Pollutions- Pesticides and other chemicals

Outdoor Pollutions- Pollution due to vehicles, factories etc.

Ayurveda view of Male Infertility

Ayurveda explains following causes for male infertility:

Bija Upatap (congenital abnormalities): Defects in the gamete, leading to development and structural anomalies of reproductive system, chromosomal disorders and various developmental disorders can be considered in this group.

Sukra Dosha (diseases of sperm): Seminal morbidity is the common problem some leading factors for this are.

Food factors: Habitual and excessive use of dry, bitter, astringent, salty, acidic and hot food. Foods which are at variance with place, time, power of digestion, quantity, habit, doshas and mode of preparation.

Behavioral factors: Excessive carnal indulgence, untimely intercourse, sexual abuse, abstinence, bodily exertion in excess, suppression of natural urges and intercourse with an unresponsive woman. Also behavioral habits like sleeping very late at night, hectic lifestyle lead to disparity of rakta (blood) and pitta dosha, ultimately causing shukra kshaya i.e.deficit in Shukra Dhatu qualitatively and quantitatively.

Psychological factors: Grief, anxiety, fear, anger and lack of mutual love and confidence

Klaibya (loss of libido): Causes like psychic, dietary, exhaustion of shukra, old age, mental worries, debilitating diseases (like TB, Diabetes mellitus), overstrain, excessive indulgence in sex are considered as contributory factors of quantitative and qualitative diminution of sukra.

How to Prevent Male Infertility

In the classics of Ayurveda the following charya's (code of conduct) have been mentioned with which a person will be able to be healthy and cure many of life style disorders such as infertility.

- Dincharya (daily regimen)
- Rutucharya (seasonal regimen)
- Ratricharya (night regimen)
- Thrayopasthambha palana (Ahara, Nidra, Brahmacharya)
- Achara rasayana (code of conduct)
- Ashtanga Yogas
- Panchakarma (Vaman, Virechana, Bastikarma, Uttarbasti Nasya, Raktamokshana: as per requirement)

- Vajikarana dravyas for example-Kapikacchu, Gokshura, Ashwagandha etc.

Ayurveda focuses on diet more than medicines to avoid male infertility and to restore the quality and quantity of sukra (semen).

Recipes for nourishing Sukra (Semen)

Mango (*Mangifera indica*)

Well-ripened mango is sweet in taste followed by astringent, aphrodisiac, demulcent, general and reproductive tonic and is a rich source of vitamin A.



Mango Bar

- Well ripened mango pulp – 0.5 kg
- Sugar – 0.5 kg
- Ela Powder (cardamom)–3gms

Wash the mangoes, peel their skin, cut it in to small pieces grind it to make pulp, without adding water. Now take a thick bottomed pan add this mango pulp in it, put it on gas flame for boiling, stir well, after 20 min of heat its colour changes. Add sugar equal to pulp, heat it for another 20 mints, and add ela churna for flavour. Take one plate with ghee gracing pour above mixture, spread it uniformly, and allow cooling. After cooling cut this into small pieces and store them into air tight jar for further use.

Almonds (*Prunus amygdalus*)

Almonds are hot in potency, highly demulcent, heavy, relieve vata, and promote semen. They are used in treatment of nerve disorder, general debility, to improve memory power and sexual vigor. Almonds are rich in zinc and Vitamin E.

It is an important nutrient for spermatogenesis. Use of Almonds in daily diet will improve sperm count.

Almond Milk Shake contains milk, ghee, saffron, rose petals, cardamom, black pepper which gives perfect blend for good digestion with sperm count

- Almond seeds- 10
- Drinking water- 1 cup
- Cow Milk - 250 ml
- Deshi rose petals – 1tsf
- Cow Ghee – 1tsf
- Saffron – 3 to 5 sticks
- Cardamom powder – 2 to 3 pinch
- Black pepper powder – 1pinch
- Sugar candy for taste



Soak almonds in water overnight. In the morning, drain off the water and rub the skin off the almonds. Bring the milk to a boil; pour milk in blender with the peeled almonds. Add rose petals, ghee, saffron, cardamom, black pepper, and sugar candy. Blend until smooth.

Rice (*Oryza sativa*)

According to Ayurveda, Shashtika Shali (variety of rice which yields in 60 days) is beneficial for semen production. The most beneficial variety of it is Rakat Shali that has antioxidant anthocyanins found in it. Use of this improves quality and quantity of semen.

Tandalachi Kheer

- Red Rice – 100gms
- Cow milk – 400ml
- Water – 200ml
- Cardamom powder – 1/8 tsf (optional)
- Sugar or Jaggery -50gms

Wash rice and soak in water for 15 to 20 minutes. Add water and pressure cook for 2 to 3 minutes, allow the pressure to settle, open the cooker lid. Add boiled milk, close the lid again and pressure cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Once pressure settles open the lid, add cardamom powder, sugar or grated jaggery, and mix well. Serve hot by adding cow ghee.

Cow Ghee

Traditionally prepared ghee (obtaining butter after churning curd, heating butter to get ghee) is palatable to all human beings from new born to aged. Without ghee, Ayurveda as well health is incomplete, it has several uses in various systems, and is useful to improve quality of shukra dhatu in males. Ghee improves memory, intelligence, complexion, voice, personal beauty, amiability of features and bodily ojas. It is vitalizing, rejuvenating, spermatopoeitic and heavy. Rich in vitamin E and antioxidants, cow ghee is an important nutrient for shukra vaha srotas. Ghee should be used as an anupana (delivery vehicle) for herbs intended to improve sperm count and also used in cooking.

Urad Dal (*Phaseolus mungo*)

In Ayurveda it is known as Masha. While explaining vajikarana adhayaya, Charaka Acharya wrote a whole chapter on this “ Mashaparnabhritiyam Adhayay”. So one can understand its importance in male infertility and its aphrodisiac quality. Urad dal is heavy in digestion, demulcent, reduces vata, laxative, nutritive, strengthening, promoter of semen and extremely nourishing.

Udeedache Varan

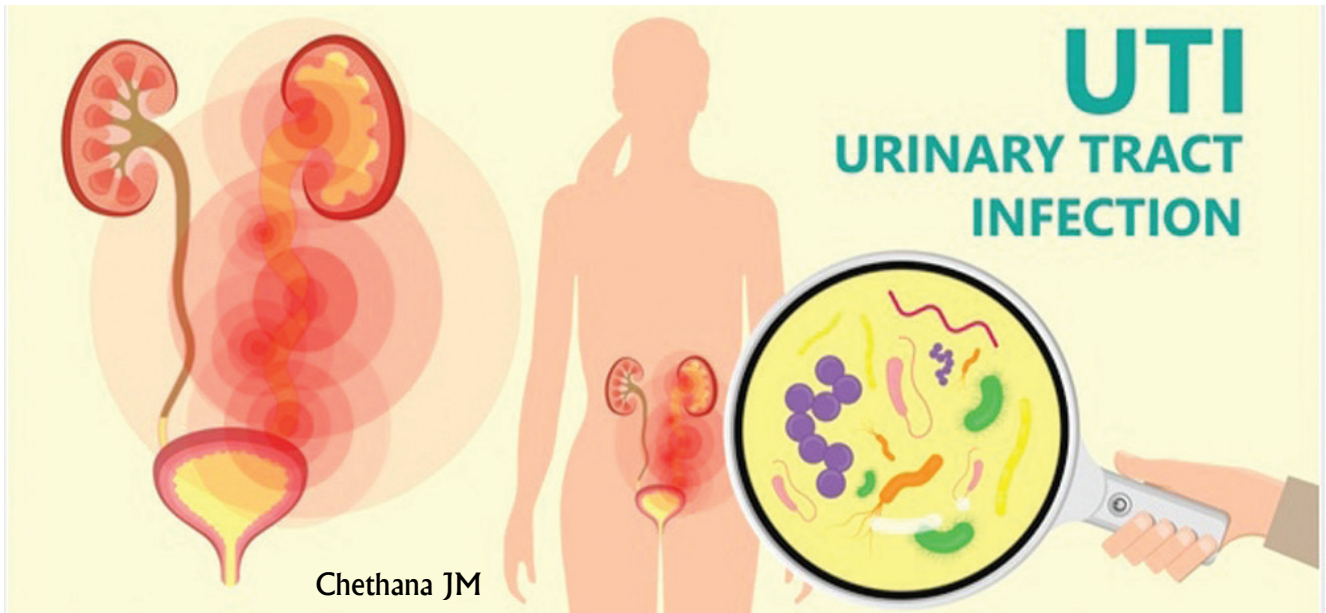
- Udeed dal – 50gms
- Garlic paste- 0.5tsf
- 1 green chili, chopped,
- Cumin seeds-1/4 tsf
- Curry leaves- 1 to 2 strings
- Turmeric powder – 1/4 tsf
- Salt to taste
- Pinch of Garam masala
- Red chili powder to taste
- 2 tablespoons ghee
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice.(optional)
- Coriander leaves, chopped.



Clean and wash the dal, boil in 5 cups of water until soft. Heat ghee in a small frying pan and add bay leaves and cumin seeds, allow spluttering. Now add garlic paste and green chili and stir-fry till golden brown. Add turmeric powder, chili powder, salt and fry for a moment. Now add dal and lemon juice, mix very gently. Sprinkle garam masala and garnish with fresh chopped coriander leaves. Serve hot with chapati or rice.

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Understanding



Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) remains the most common infection worldwide that can occur at any time in the life of an individual irrespective of age and sex. About 40% women and 12% men suffer with UTI infection at least once in their lifetime. However, recurrent infection is also possible.

UTI has been known to the world for ages as one can find evidence of its reference in various Ayurvedic treatises.

Suffering from Urinary Tract Infection? Beware; it may affect your Fertility!

Urinary tract infection affects the kidneys, uterus, bladder, and liver: the organs responsible for the removal of waste from the body. However, if this infection reoccurs and stays for a long period, it may hamper with conception and cause certain fertility issues. The issue of urinary tract infections affects both men and women, but women are more vulnerable to UTIs as the female

urinary tract is smaller as compared to men. Therefore, women have to take extra care to prevent UTIs. UTI in males can also lead to infertility. Infections of genito-urinary tract may account for male infertility. The bacteria spread across the prostate gland and other reproductive structures which may result in decreased sperm count and motility.

What is UTI?

It is the multiplication of organisms in the urinary tract. It can be subdivided into two based on the anatomic location:

- Lower Tract Infection (Urethritis and Cystitis)



- Upper tract infection (acute pyelonephritis, prostatitis and internal / perinephric abscesses) When one suffers from UTI there will be pain, discomfort or burning sensation while urinating. At times, there can be foul or strong odour, cloudy/ bloody urine with an increased frequency or urge to urinate and a prolonged duration of infection may result in fever too.

Who is likely to suffer from UTI?

People of any age and gender can develop UTI. Some factors can increase the likelihood of developing a UTI such as: poor personal hygiene, diabetes, problems emptying the bladder completely, having a urinary catheter, bowel incontinence, blocked flow of urine, kidney stones, not voiding of urine post sexual intercourse, some forms of contraception, pregnancy, menopause, procedures involving the urinary tract, suppressed immune system, use of spermicides and tampons or heavy use of antibiotics, which can disrupt the natural flora of the bowel and urinary tract.

Urinary tract infections (UTI) can occur in any part of the urinary tract including kidneys, ureter, urinary bladder and urethra.

Etiology

Urinary tract infections are caused mainly by colonic bacteria. In females, 75-90% of all infections are caused by *Escherichia coli*, followed by *Klebsiella* and *Proteus*. *Enterococcus* species, *Staphylococcus*, *saprophyticus* especially

in female adolescent and sexually active females and *Streptococcus* group B especially in neonates are included in other bacterial sources of UTI. Sometimes fungi (*Candida* species) may also cause UTIs.

Ayurvedic Perspective

Mutrakrichchhra is a broad term which covers all most all the conditions of urinary tract infection (UTI) that is described in modern medical science. The term *Mutrakrichchhra* originates from two words -Mutra and Krichchhra and is self -explanatory. The word *mutra* is derived from 'prasrava' means to ooze. The word 'krichchhra' is derived from 'kashte' means causing trouble or painful. Difficult or painful micturition is called as *Mutrakrichchhra*.

Mutrakrichchhra can be defined as "the painful voiding of urine". In this condition the person experiences pain while passes urine. The pratyatma lakshana (cardinal symptom) of *Mutrakrichchhra* is "Dukhena mutra pravritti" that means discomfort during micturition.

Mutrakrichchhra is also found as a symptom in other diseases like Ashmari (calculi in urinary tract), *Mutraghata* (obstruction in the passage of urine), *Mutraja vridhdhri* (hydrocele), *Arsha* (haemorrhoids), *Gulma* etc.

Managing UTI through Ayurveda

First line of management is through avoiding the cause. UTIs are due to an imbalance of pitta dosha. Main factors that aggravate pitta dosha and contribute to UTIs need to be avoided. This can be done by

reducing intake of hot/ spicy/ sour food, avoiding alcohol and exposure to extreme heat and overexposure to sunlight. Practising to stay calm and thus avoiding emotions of anger/ hatred etc. is beneficial too.

Chikitsa (Management)

Shamana chikitsa: It includes Mutra-vishodhaniya, mutra-virechaniya, mutra-viranjaniya and ashmarihara dravyas.

Shodhana chikitsa: It includes diuretic drugs and Uttara vasti which dilutes and flushes various infective agents along with urine.

Bahirparimarjana chikitsa: It includes medicines that can be used externally in the form of douches, fomentation, showers, poultices, ointment etc.

Some important formulations include: *Chandraprabha vati*, *Varunadi kwatha*, *Varunashigruadi kwatha*, *Gokshuradi guggulu*, *Gokshuradi kwatha*, *Chandanasava* and *Chandrakala rasa*.

Do's (Pathya: Consumption of following is Beneficial)

Ahara:	Vihara:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puratana Loha shali – Old red rice • Mudgarasa – soup prepared from green gram • Sita – sugar candy • Takram – Buttermilk • Paya – Milk • Dadhi – Curds • Purana Kushmanda phala – Ash gourd (Old Benincasa hispida) • Patola – Pointed gourd • Kharjura – Dates • Narikela – Tender coconut (water) • Amalaki - Amla fruit - <i>Emblica officinalis</i> • Ghrita – Ghee • Prateera neeram – Water of river banks • Himavaluka – cold sand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abhyanga, • Swedana, • Avagahana

Apathya: Foods/ habits to be avoided/ Contraindications as per Ayurveda:

Ahara: Avoid Intake of following food items:	Vihara:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tambula Bhakshana – intake of paan • Matsya – Fish • Lavanam – salt • Ardrakam – Wet ginger • Taila bhrisam – Fried foods • Pinyakam – Dishes prepared from the paste of sesame seeds • Hingu – Asafoetida • Tila – Sesamum • Sarshapa – Mustard • Masha – Preparations of black gram • Teekshna-vidahi-ruksha-amla ahara –intense – irritating in nature- produces burning – dry, stale and a sour taste food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madhyapanam – Alcohol consumption • Parishramam – Exertion • Ati maithunam – indulging in excessive sex • Yanam – Riding animals like elephant and horse • Viruddha bhojana –Intake of Incompatible foods • Vishama asana – sitting in uncomfortable positions / improper posture • Mutravega dharana– holding the urge of urination

Tips to prevent the occurrence of UTI

- Drink plenty of liquids/ fluids, it helps flushing out the toxins in the urinary tract.
- Remember to pass urine/ urinate after sexual intercourse to flush bacteria out of the urethra.
- Avoid controlling the urge of urine for long time.
- Maintain good personal hygiene.
- Practice safe sex.

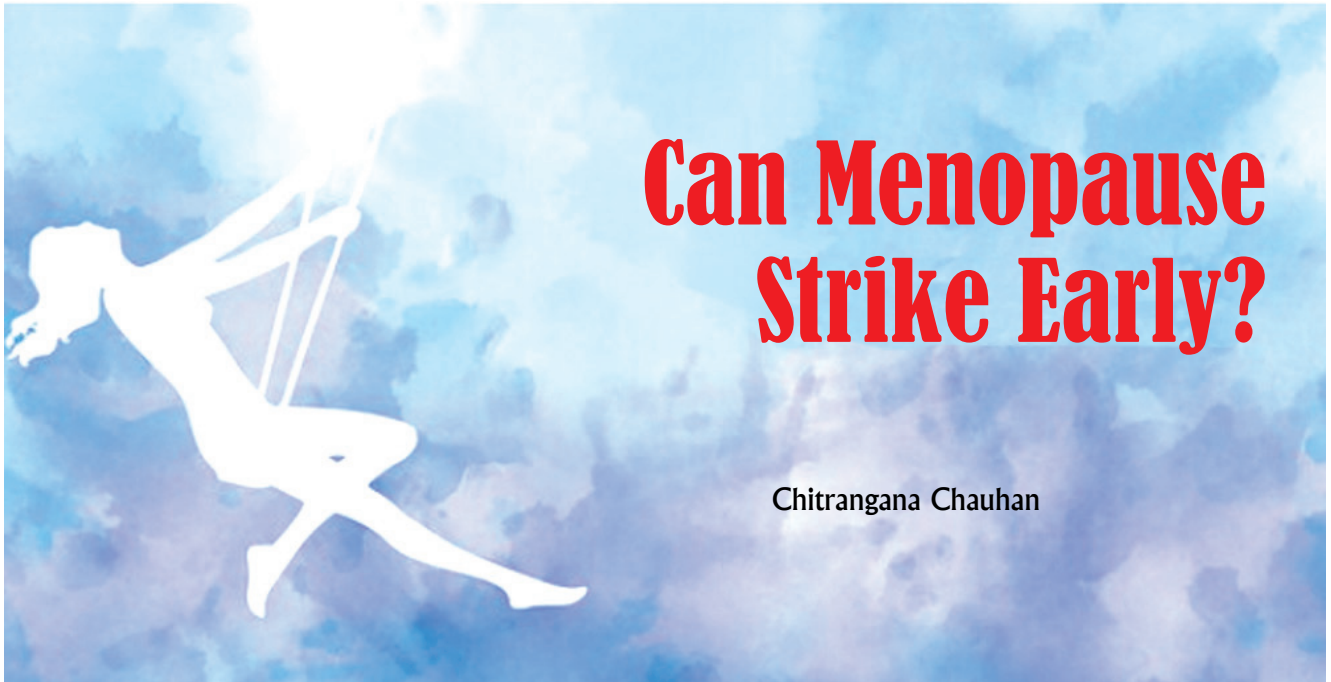
For Women:

- Follow proper wash technique: Women should

wipe from front to back after having a bowel evacuation.

- Keep the genital area clean and dry, change tampons and sanitary napkins frequently and avoid using irritating soaps, vaginal sprays and douches.
- During menstruation: remember to regularly change the sanitary napkins. Prolonged usage without changing can also lead to UTI.

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Can Menopause Strike Early?

Chitrangana Chauhan

Menopause is a stage in life when a woman can no longer become pregnant. The average woman goes through natural menopause in her early 50s. Premature menopause happens to women before age 40 and early menopause happens before age 45. The symptoms for these conditions are similar to natural menopause and the causes are often unknown.

Menopause is a natural biological process termed as Rajonivritti in Ayurveda terminology. According to Ayurveda, **menopause is linked with ageing**. Ageing involves a vata predominant state of life. However, some women experience the symptoms of menopause at an early age. The symptoms of menopause experienced by some women are similar to the symptoms seen when the vata dosha rises and upsets the normal balance of body.

Every woman goes through menopause (Rajonivritti). It is one of the natural signals of end of the menstrual cycle. Commonly seen is a reduction in the production of the female hormone

estrogen. The body is transitioning from the Pitta phase into the Vata phase of life.

Vata controls all the movements in the mind and body, including blood flow, heart function, breathing, the neuro- hormonal system and also controls the level of estrogen in the body. So, any imbalance in Vata impacts the functioning of the ovaries. Women who have experienced Pitta or Vata imbalance in the years leading up to the menopause are likely to have a difficult time during this phase.

Causes : The causes of premature menopause can be classified into two categories:

Medical factors

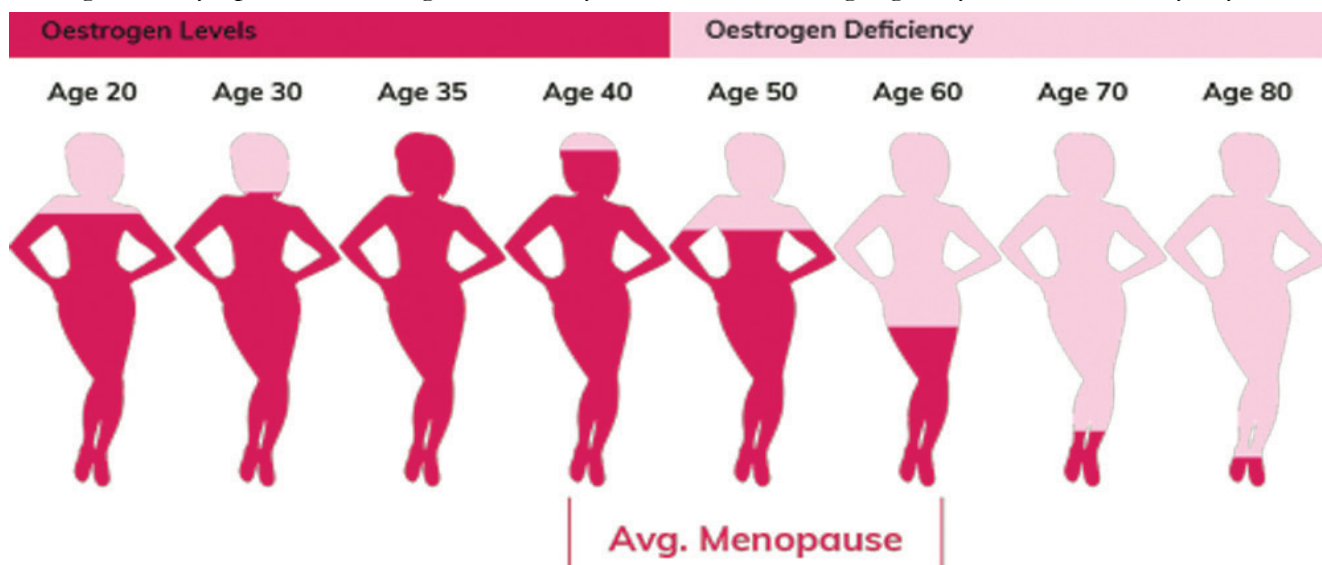
- Primary ovarian insufficiency
- Hypothalamic and pituitary tumors
- Surgery to remove the ovaries or uterus
- Chemotherapy or radiation therapy for cancer
- Chronic diseases
- Psychiatric disorders

Lifestyle Factors

- Stress and tension
- Lack of exercise & Hectic schedule
- Poor nutrition and junk food
- Use of harsh chemicals that get absorbed into our skin
- Pollution and lack of greenery
- Smoking, drinking, and substance abuse
- Emotional turmoil
- Estrogen is stored in the fat tissues of the body. Women who are very thin have less estrogen stored and are at higher risk of early menopause.

How to Identify

The diagnosis should always be considered in any woman presenting with a history of primary or secondary amenorrhea or oligomenorrhea, vasomotor disturbances or other signs of estrogen deficiency and may be confirmed by the detection of an elevated serum level of follicle stimulating hormone and estrogen deficiency. In short and simple, understanding the diagnosis is based on a triad of amenorrhea, elevated gonadotropin levels and signs and symptoms of estrogen deficiency.



Premature Menopause or early menopause is associated with multiple symptoms such as irregular / missed periods with heavier or lighter flow than usual, vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes and night sweats), vaginal symptoms (vaginal dryness and dyspareunia), urinary symptoms (frequency, urgency, incontinence and atrophic cystitis), sexual dysfunction, and sleep disturbances. Other symptoms are headache, depression, anxiety, irritability, skin atrophy, joint pains, cancer, phobia and lack of concentration.

Early onset of menopause should not be taken lightly. Lower levels of estrogen in the body can lead to complications like osteoporosis, gum diseases and cataract formation. It can even put women at risk of colon and ovarian cancer.

Measures to be on safer side

Since premature menopause is irreversible, the best advice is to take preventive measure. The following diet and lifestyle changes are recommended

- Meditate to calm the mind and reduce the stress.
- Consume fruits and vegetables of organic produce, which are free of pesticides and insecticides.
- Say No to smoking, alcohol and drugs.
- Follow balanced healthy diet and consume meals on time. Say no to junk food, fizzy drinks; reduce the amount of refined sugar and caffeine intake.
- Avoid salty, spicy and sour foods. Eat more of warm food, drinks and add Indian spices like fennel and cumin seeds to meals.
- Exercising regularly 30 minutes every day.

Ayurveda Insight

Ayurvedic Rasayana Chikitsa, following Dincharya, Rutucharya, regular seasonal Panchakarma and Satvavajaya Chikitsa prove to be beneficial.

Most of the early menopause symptoms are due the Vata-aggravation followed by other factors. In the early Menopause, it is best to balance the aggravated doshas so that the intensity of the symptoms will be less or even can be negligible. In order to achieve this one should follow the Dosha specific Ayurvedic Diet and lifestyle followed by Ayurveda herbs on regular basis. If still symptoms persist, it is better to undergo 'Panchakarma' (detoxification) which helps in the elimination of vitiated doshas to bring them to balanced stage.

The following can be considered in the management of this condition.

- Appropriate diet and herbs
- Panchakarma therapy (Internal detoxification therapy)
- Sattvavajaya Chikitsa
- Yoga
- Rasayana Chikitsa
- **Herbs** *Withania somnifera*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Elettaria cardamomum*, *Allium sativum*, *Commiphora mukul*, *Santalum alba*, *Zizyphus jujube*, *Aloe vera*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Embelica officinalis*, *Crocus sativus*, *Brassica nigra*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Cyperus rotundus*.
- **Rasayana**- Many drugs act as rasayana property Triphala: Triphala consisting of Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Vibhitaki (*Terminalia bellerica*), Amalaki (*Embelica officinalis*), pacify all the three doshas and also is an excellent vayasthapana (antiaging agent). Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is a powerful antioxidant and immune modulator. It improves strength, muscle mass and relieves stress. In early menopause, it effectively controls the vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes, night sweats, palpitation). Yasthimadhu (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is another rasayana drug which is prescribed for early menopause. It is an excellent antioxidant, immunomodulator, anti- depressant and memory enhancer. Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*)—The



root contains phytoestrogen, helping to regulate estrogen from ovaries and the skin.

- The most beneficial practices are Yogasanas, Pranayama and Meditation (Dhyana). Varjāsana, Veerabhadrasana, SuryaNamaskar, Pranayama—Sheetalipranayam, Ujjayipranayama, Kapalbhāti are beneficial. Current evidence indicates that women will benefit from yoga therapy during early menopausal stage in term of decrease risk of cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance, loss of bone mineral density as well as improved psychological wellbeing, sleep patterns and emotional modulation.

At the end of the day, your health is your responsibility. As also the quote goes "**Communities and countries and ultimately the world are only as strong as the health of their women**" so, with the specialist guidance, supervision, little bit of awareness, diet and lifestyle modification, women can keep themselves protected from early menopause and live a healthy life.

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Natural Contraceptives

Arun Bhanu K



Every woman in the world will go through a series of hormonal imbalances and associated health issues. During the period, family planning things need to be adapted so as to protect the health of woman. Unexpected pregnancy, or unplanned pregnancy can lead to severe health issues for those who are having the cycle related or hormone related issues.

Several ways of contraception are available these days. But nothing will guarantee complete success. In fact, many methods might affect the health also negatively. Thus, it is really important and helpful to know about some natural methods which will not harm the body even though they do not guarantee 100% success.

Various Methods which can help naturally

Ginger Tea: Drinking 4 cups of ginger tea per day for not more than 5 days helps to initiate menstruation.

Also mix 1 teaspoon of powdered ginger in 6 ounces of boiling water and consume while hot.

Castor seed: Take fresh castor seeds and break them open. Once it is split, can a white seed inside. Consume this seed within 72 hours after sexual intercourse. It works like the emergency contraceptive pill.

Dried mint leaves: Mint leaves or pudina leaves have natural contraceptive qualities. Consume 1 teaspoon dried mint leaves with warm water, immediately after intercourse to avoid pregnancy.

Hibiscus flower paste: Hibiscus flowers contain benzene. The benzene extract has anti-fertility effects, which can act as a contraceptive. So, consuming the paste of hibiscus flowers can act like a contraceptive.

False black pepper combination: The seeds of vidanga or false black pepper is a potent

contraceptive agent and has a high rate of anti-fertility effect. It is usually given in combination with other ingredients (table 2)

Talisapatra powder: Talisapatra (*Abies webbiana*) can be used as an oral contraceptive. The action of the herb is that it prevents the fertilized egg from implanting into the uterine wall, preventing pregnancy.

Local contraceptives

Sl No	Remedies	Mode of Administration
1	Powdered seeds of Palasa (<i>Butea monosperma</i>) + Honey.	Vaginal paste during Rtu Kala (Menstrual cycle)
2	Piece of Rock salt+ oil.	Vaginal Insertion before coitus
3	Wood of Nimba (<i>Azadirachta indica</i>)	Vaginal fumigation during Rtu Kala.
4	Powdered root of Dhattura* (<i>Datura metel</i>)	Vaginal filling before coitus.
5	Root of Dhattura*	Tie on waist before coitus.

*To be plucked on 14th day (dark night) of lunar month.

Oral Contraceptives

Sl No.	Combination	Period and Method of Consumption	Duration
1	Powder of Pippali (<i>Piper longum</i>) + Vidanga (<i>Embelia ribes</i> + Tankana (Borax)	Rtu Kala (with milk)	
2	Flowers of Japa (<i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i>) + Kanji (fermented drink)	Rtu Kala (with 48 gms. old jaggery)	3 days
3	Root of Tanduliyaka (<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i>) + Tandulodaka (Rice water)	After menstruation	3 days
4	Leaves of Talisa (<i>Abies webbiana</i>) + Gairika (Red ochre)	12 gms. on 4th day. of menstruation	1 Day
5	Rasanjana (Extract of <i>Berberis aristata</i>) + Haimavati (Sweta-Vaca) (<i>Iris germanica</i>) + Vayastha (Haritaki) (<i>Terminalia chebula</i>)	With cold water	



Contraceptive methods, whether it is natural or any other means has to be undertaken very carefully as it can alter physiological functions as well. So, such methods have to be undertaken with supervision only. Diet control and exercise should also to be followed along with so as to ensure adequate nutrient supply.

The above mentioned methods will not guarantee any complete contraception. Also, these methods are to be done under medical supervision.

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Healing Mudras



Suresh Duggal

Your health is, quite literally, in your hands....

The term mudra is used to signify a gesture, a mystic position of the hands, a seal or even a symbol. One can effectively engage and influence the body and mind by bending, crossing, extending, or touching the fingers with other fingers.

Each mudra creates a special connection to cosmic consciousness. For example, the thumb is symbolic of cosmic (divine) and the index finger is symbolic of individual (human) consciousness. According to Chinese Five Element Theory, both these fingers belong to the metal element. Metal conducts energy. Mudras are found not only in Asia but they are used throughout the entire world. In India, the various mudras are significant in the depiction of Hindu Gods and their spiritual meaning are expressed in Indian art. Certain gestures can positively influence the psyche.

Mudras can be done while seated, lying down, standing, and walking. Of course, if one has time, these should

be done in a meditative, harmonious mood. Mudras can be practiced almost anywhere and at any time, but only when we can withdraw within ourselves. A good time to practice mudras is a few minutes before getting up and a few minutes before falling asleep, before or after meals, while on public transportation, or during breaks at work. In the beginning, it is better to do mudras just one or two a day.

Every healing within also brings healing into your world. An illness in the body is always connected with thoughts and feelings that make people sick. A certain amount of time is required before healing takes place on every level. So, one should allow oneself the time and practice ardently and remain completely serene and confident while doing so.

Mudras can be practiced for 3 to 30 minutes, two to four times a day, but acute complaints such as respiratory and circulation problems, flatulence,

exhaustion, or inner restlessness-should be discontinued when the appropriate effect is achieved.

The effect of a mudra may be perceived immediately or only after a certain amount of time. One may start feeling warm, the sense of unwellness and pain fade away, mood improves, and mind is refreshed. But exactly the opposite may occur sometimes at the start.

Enhancing Mudras

The effect of a mudra can be intensified with the breath, while following certain principles: Exhaling vigorously several times at the beginning of a mudra; lengthening the little pause after inhaling and after exhaling by several seconds etc. The optimal quality of breathing is achieved when the breath is slow, deep, rhythmic, flowing, and fine.

Further mudras and music can have a wonderful influence on each other. Paying attention to the taste in music, its playing time and listening consciously can help to get a lot from mudras. Classical music is suited for healing and relaxing, and solo concerts have a stronger effect than symphonies. There is a

special power in slow movements-andante, adagio, and largo. For relaxation effect, the most suitable instrument is oboe, followed by the piano, the cello, the violin, the clarinet, and the organ.

Colours influence our minds and our lives on every level. In color therapy, various shades of color are specifically applied to regenerate the organs, and glands, as well as to activate the processes of elimination, respiration, and circulation. While holding a mudra, one can either visualize a colour or concentrate on the colour of an object.

Healing: Physical and Emotional Problems

Practicing the mudras, together with a healthy diet, routine rest periods, adequate exercise (yoga, jogging, hiking, biking, etc.) will naturally lead to an optimal lifestyle. And this is the basis for health.

Mudras used against a great variety of health disorders are primarily used in Chinese medicine. Not only the hand lines show the past and future of a person, but also each finger has its own functions and power within the organism.



Practicing mudras can also be a pure brain training. There is a positive influence on the brain influence, particularly when the fingertips touch each other. The accompanying affirmations promote a clear manner of expression, which is also a mental power. Many mudras synchronize the right and left hemisphere of the brain.

Mudras have a wondrous effect on the emotional area of our lives, which includes the soul, our feelings, and our moods. Moody fluctuations, which many people suffer from today, can often be largely eliminated within a few days by using mudras. Moods and physical complaints are similar. In order to cure them we must look for and remedy the cause, which almost always lies within.

A mudra can have many positive effects. But not only we can use mudras to influence our body regions and functions, but every act of touching and every movement of the hands has its special effect. Doing handicrafts, playing an instrument, washing the hands, or massaging all of these acts have long lasting effects.

Mudras and Meditation

The meaning and purpose of meditation are also supported by the mudras. One can use meditation for everything. Similarly, mudras can be used for recharging energy reserves, for coming to terms with the past, and for solving everyday problems. Further they can be used for building character, planning the future, and connecting with the Divine.

The different fingers are associated with different energies:

- Thumb - Fire element, lung meridian, and Mars
- Index Finger - Heart chakra, large intestine, and deep meridian of stomach
- Middle Finger - Throat chakra, heavenly finger
- Ring Finger - Root chakra, sun God
- Little Finger - Sacral chakra, interpersonal relationships

Examples for Body, Mind, and Soul

Mudras are primarily used to support the healing of physical complaints. Combined with visualizations and affirmations, they also influence mind and emotions.

While using mudras for healing it is important to consider:

- o What is the true cause?
- o What advantages of illness does the disease give me?
- o We must be willing to let go of everything that makes us ill

Examples

- o Ganesha mudra – Ganesha, the deity who overcomes all obstacles
- o Bronchial, Asthma mudras
- o Apan (Energy) mudra
- o Shunya (Heaven), Prithvi (Earth) mudras
- o Kubera mudra (Dedicated to the God of wealth)
- o Rudra mudra (Ruler of the solar plexus chakra)
- o Shakti mudra
- o Shivalinga

Spiritual Mudras

These mudras have been used in temples and churches to support meditation and prayer. I think spirituality should be integrated into everyday life, plans for the future, and coming to the terms with the past.

Examples

- Atmanjali mudra (Gesture of prayer)
- Dhvani mudra (Gesture of meditation)
- Lotus mudra (Symbol of purity)

The Mudras of Hatha Yoga

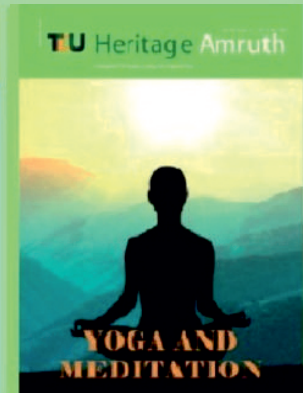
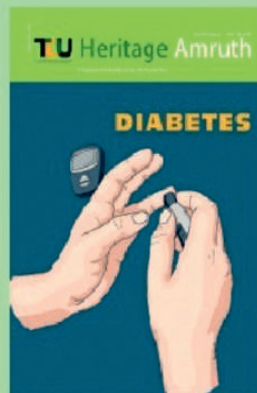
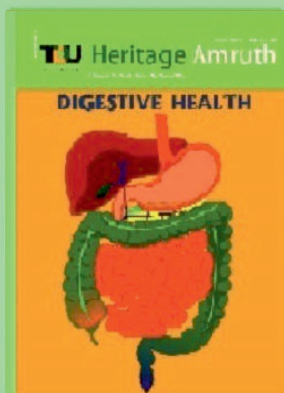
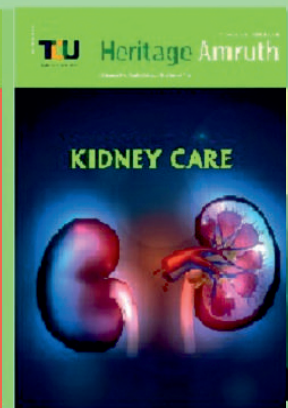
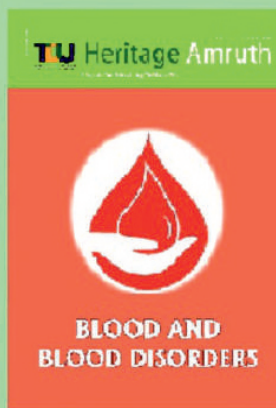
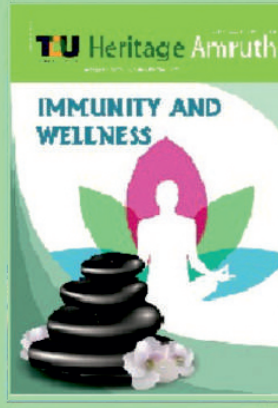
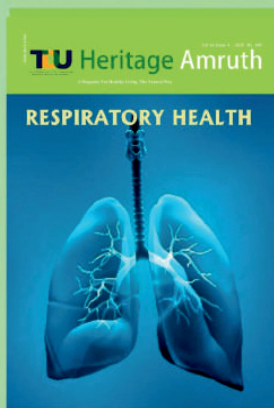
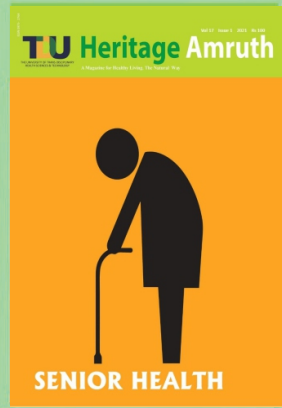
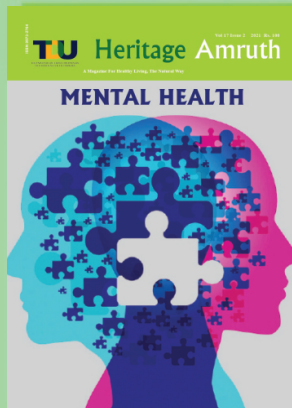
Classical mudras are mainly used for awakening kundalini, experiencing states of expanded consciousness, or achieving enlightenment.

Examples

- Jnana/ Gyan mudra (Gesture of knowledge)
- Akashi mudra (The consciousness of inner space)
- Shanti mudra (peace)
- Maha mudra

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