

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PRENATAL CARE: YOGA IN THE SECOND TRIMESTER THROUGH AYURVEDIC INSIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

The second trimester of pregnancy represents a stage of stability, nourishment, and foetal growth. Ayurveda, through *Garbhini Parichay* (antenatal regimen), emphasizes the holistic care of the expectant mother by balancing *doshas*, ensuring proper nutrition, and maintaining mental calmness. Yoga, an integral part of Ayurvedic philosophy, complements these principles through gentle physical, respiratory, and meditative practices. This paper explores Ayurvedic insights on pregnancy in the second trimester and examines the role of yoga as a therapeutic and preventive measure to enhance maternal and foetal well-being.^[1]

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Garbhini Paricharya*, Yoga, Second Trimester, Prenatal Care.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a transformative period characterized by physiological, psychological, and emotional changes. According to Ayurveda, the second trimester (*Madhyama Garbha Avastha*) marks a phase of relative comfort compared to the first, as early symptoms such as nausea and fatigue subside. During this period, the emphasis shifts to nourishment and the proper development of the foetus.

Ayurveda regards pregnancy as a *samskara*—a sacred and natural process that requires maintaining harmony of *doshas* (biological energies: *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), *Agni* (digestive fire), and *Manas* (mind). *Garbhini Paricharya*, or

antenatal regimen, includes dietary, behavioural, and therapeutic guidelines to promote healthy gestation and prevent complications. Yoga, when integrated within this framework, supports balance and vitality through gentle physical activity and mindfulness.

Ayurvedic Understanding of the Second Trimester

The second trimester (fourth to sixth month) is the period of foetal growth and maternal adaptation. Ayurveda emphasizes nourishment (*poshana*) through unctuous and easily digestible foods such as milk, ghee, rice gruel, and clarified butter to strengthen maternal tissues and foetal development. *Vata dosha*, which governs movement and nervous functions, must be pacified to prevent restlessness, anxiety, and musculoskeletal discomforts.^[2]

Emotional stability is equally emphasized. A calm environment, positive thinking, and spiritual practices are encouraged to nurture *Sattva guna* (purity and balance). These principles align with yoga philosophy, which advocates the union of body, mind, and consciousness to achieve holistic health.

Role of Yoga in the Second Trimester

Yoga, derived from the Sanskrit root “*Yuj*” meaning “to unite,” serves as both a physical discipline and a spiritual path.^[3] In the second trimester, yoga helps maintain flexibility, relieves back pain, enhances circulation, and fosters emotional stability. The focus should be on gentle, restorative practices that avoid abdominal strain or deep twists.

1. Recommended Yogic Practices

Asanas (Postures)

- **Tadasana (Mountain Pose):** Improves posture, strengthens legs, and enhances balance.
- **Baddha Konasana (Butterfly Pose):** Opens the hips and pelvis, increasing blood flow to reproductive organs.
- **Vrikshasana (Tree Pose):** Builds concentration and stability.
- **Marjariasana (Cat-Cow Stretch):** Relieves lower back tension and improves spinal flexibility.
- **Supta Baddha Konasana (Reclined Bound Angle Pose):** Encourages relaxation and deep breathing.

Pranayama (Breathing Techniques)

- **Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing):** Balances *Prana Vata* and calms the nervous system.
- **Bhramari (Humming Bee Breath):** Reduces anxiety and promotes emotional balance.
- **Deep Diaphragmatic Breathing:** Enhances oxygen supply to both mother and foetus.

Dhayana (Meditation)

Meditation enhances mental clarity and emotional harmony. Mantra chanting such as “*Om Shanti*” or visualizing the growing life within fosters a positive maternal-foetal connection and encourages *Sattvic* consciousness.^[4]

Physiological and Psychological Benefits

Scientific and Ayurvedic perspectives converge on the benefits of prenatal yoga in the second trimester. Regular practice improves posture and spinal alignment, reducing back pain and sciatica.

- Enhances blood circulation and oxygen delivery to the foetus.
- Regulates digestion, alleviating common pregnancy complaints such as bloating or constipation.
- Balances hormonal fluctuations, reducing anxiety and mood swings.

- Promotes relaxation, emotional stability, and quality sleep.

From an Ayurvedic viewpoint, these outcomes reflect the balance of *Vata* and *Pitta doshas*, healthy *Agni*, and enhanced *Ojas*—the vital essence responsible for immunity and vitality.

Modern research also supports these findings. Studies have shown that prenatal yoga significantly reduces maternal stress and depression and improves birth.

Precautions and Contraindications

While yoga offers numerous benefits, it must be adapted to the physiological limitations of pregnancy. Certain precautions include

- Avoiding deep twists, forward bends, or abdominal compression.
- Refraining from prolonged supine postures after the fourth month.
- Practicing under the supervision of a certified prenatal yoga instructor.
- Discontinuing practice in case of dizziness, pain, or fatigue.

Each session should conclude with *Shavasana* (Corpse Pose) in a side-lying position to ensure comfort and safety.

Integration of Yoga with *Garbhini Paricharya*^[5,6]

The synthesis of yoga and *Garbhini Paricharya* enhances maternal well-being through a holistic approach. Ayurveda provides dietary and lifestyle guidance to balance internal physiology, while yoga harmonizes body-mind coordination through physical and mental disciplines.

Ayurvedic Principle	Yogic Correlation	Outcome
<i>Vata Shamana</i> (Pacification of Vata)	Gentle Asanas, Deep Breathing	Reduces restlessness and back pain
<i>Manas Shuddhi</i> (Mental Purity)	Meditation and Mantra Chanting	Emotional stability and calmness
<i>Agni Deepana</i> (Enhancing Digestion)	Mild Movement & <i>Pranayama</i>	Improved appetite and metabolism
<i>Sattva Guna Vardhana</i> (Enhancement of Positivity)	Dhyana and Relaxation	Foetal-maternal harmony and peace

This integrative model demonstrates that yoga complements Ayurveda not merely as exercise but as a therapeutic discipline aligned with the principles of *dosha*, *dhatu*, and *manas* balance.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda and yoga both emphasize preventive and promotive healthcare. Their integration during pregnancy supports not only physical adaptation but also emotional resilience. The second trimester, being a period of growth and vitality, benefits from mild movement, controlled breathing, and mindfulness activities that counter *Vata* disturbances and nurture *Sattva*.

This approach also aligns with contemporary holistic obstetric care, which recognizes the mind-body connection in influencing maternal and foetal health. Thus, ancient Ayurvedic wisdom and yogic practices continue to hold relevance in modern prenatal care.

CONCLUSION

The practice of yoga during the second trimester, guided by Ayurvedic principles, offers a holistic and safe method for promoting maternal and foetal health. It nurtures the expectant mother's physical strength, mental peace, and emotional stability while aligning with *Garbhini Paricharya*'s goal of maintaining dosh harmony. This integrative approach exemplifies the timeless synergy between Ayurveda and yoga—providing a natural pathway for healthy pregnancy and childbirth.

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