

1. How can one incorporate Ayurvedic treatment during pregnancy? Can one have your entire pregnancy monitored through an Ayurvedic doctor or should this be done together with an Obstetrician?

Pregnancy is such a life altering and energizing experience for so many women, this journey of bringing life into this world is amazing but along with this there are emotional and physiological challenges which can place extra stress on the body.



Ayurveda compares conception to the germination and sprouting of a seed into a sapling. When the sperm and the ovum unite (seed) and the soul enters the union an embryo (*garbha*) is formed. Ayurveda discusses the importance of the quality of the sperm and ovum to form a healthy embryo as well as the soil (uterus) which provides nutrition and the right season (environment) for the seed (embryo) to grow.

There are plenty of Ayurvedic recommendations for diet, behaviour, activities and spiritual actions for the mother and the whole family to ensure a healthy baby is born. There are Ayurvedic Gynaecologists but none practicing in South Africa. Therefore it is much better for both your Obstetrician and Ayurvedic Doctor to monitor your pregnancy together.

2. Is Ayurveda safe during pregnancy, provided it is done by a qualified doctor?

Yes it is, please ensure that you consult with an Ayurvedic Doctor who has Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery Degree (B.A.M.S). It is not safe to consult with someone who does not have the expertise to ensure you receive proper care.

Any medication recommended during pregnancy is mild in nature and it is always our aim as Practitioners to protect the health of the baby and the mother. Panchakarma (detoxification) procedures are not done during pregnancy except for Basti (enema) towards the end of the third trimester, unless recommended.



Ayurveda also describes nine specific ailments, which are caused because of pregnancy. They are: nausea, anorexia, vomiting, and dryness of mouth, fever, oedema, anaemia, diarrhoea and retention of urine. Their specific treatments are also handled by a qualified (B.A.M.S) doctor.

3. What should a pregnant woman eat according to Ayurveda?

Diet in Ayurveda is so important especially for pregnant women; the extra nutrition is required for the development of the foetus and the lactation period. The diet should be rich in calories, proteins, vitamins and minerals and it should be balanced according to her specific body constitution and needs. There are also month to month recommendations described in Ayurvedic texts, please consult an Ayurvedic doctor to see what is right for you and your baby.

It is during the fourth month of pregnancy that the foetus' heart takes its place and makes known their needs and desires which is often the reason for cravings. As far as possible these cravings need to be satisfied of course within reason of not causing harm to the baby and mother. E.g. A hypertensive mother should avoid eating foods with an excess amount of sodium etc.

An Ayurvedic Diet includes a balance of cereals, lentils, fruits, vegetables etc. Foods that are cool and nourishing like ghee and milk are definitely included. An important factor with the diet is that it should be organic, fresh and easily digestible. Blanched almonds, whole and split mung beans, fennel seeds, cumin seeds, ginger, kale, collard greens and broccoli are also important balancing items to include. With these foods and spices, both the mother and baby can enjoy vibrant health.

What foods to avoid?

- Junk food
- Spicy
- Undercooked or raw lentils and vegetables
- Leftovers
- Aged cheese
- Artificial flavours
- Loaded with preservatives and chemical additives
- Frozen and canned
- Peanuts
- Garlic
- Onions
- Soft drinks
- Alcohol
- Marijuana

4. Any tips on how to help morning sickness with natural remedies?

Garlic, Chamomile tea, Peppermint tea, Sea Oak and Ginger are used to treat gestational nausea and vomiting. As a spice, ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) has a deeply rooted history in the food and pharmaceutical industry. It is also widely used in traditional medicine, especially in China, Japan, India, and Iran to treat various diseases. There a number of research studies where ginger has been used as a treatment for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. No cases of abortion or increase in birth deficit and maternal complications have been observed following its intake. Research shows that the impact of ginger in treating nausea and vomiting is caused by anti-cholinergic as well as anti-histamine properties. A prescribed dose of Ginger definitely helps in relieving nausea. Please check with your doctor before considering it.

5. Is Massage Safe during Pregnancy? Which Ayurvedic oils are good for massage during pregnancy?

Massage is safe during pregnancy, however in some cases it is not recommended in the first trimester. It is best to consult a doctor for an opinion. If however your doctor gives the go ahead there are specific oils that offer nourishment to the body such as Sesame oil, *Mahanarayan* oil,

Balashwagandhadhi, Ksheerabala oil etc. For joint and muscle pains during pregnancy *Mahanarayan* oil is the best.

6. What does Ayurveda say about balance and emotional wellbeing during pregnancy? Any tips in this regard?

Everything that surrounds the mother- to- be should promote calmness, serenity and harmony. This is what Ayurveda is all about, a healthy self -care routine with a balanced diet promotes a healthy body, mind and spirit. Nature walks, daily oil massage, light exercises, yoga, swimming, journaling and meditation can uplift her spirits and leave her feeling satisfied and rested. Meditation is especially important to calm her mind and relieve her stress because it keeps one grounded, this also helps build a deeper connection between mother and baby as their biological rhythms align and the baby begins to recognize the mother's emotions and attitudes. Research shows that for an easy delivery the mind needs to be relaxed and meditation is the key. This also an ideal time to read inspirational and motivational books as this promotes inner reflection and spirituality. A good support system also promotes emotional well-being and helps develop maternal instincts.