



Urinary tract infection & pregnancy- cure by ayurveda

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ABSTRACT: Urinary Tract Infections are among the most common health problems in clinical practice in both the sexes and in all age groups. However the prevalence and incidence of Urinary Tract Infection is higher in women because of the relatively short, straight anatomy of the ureter, hormonal effect & behavioral pattern. Pregnancy causes numerous changes in the women's body. These changes increase the risk of serious infectious complications even in healthy pregnant women. Urinary Tract Infection can happen anywhere along the urinary track. It can be any infection of the bladder (cystitis) or more serious infection of the kidney (pyelonephritis). *Ayurveda* provides preventive and promotive approach. So when the multidisciplinary *Ayurvedic* treatment is administered, the outcome is very significant and we can prevent and cure UTI.

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1. Introduction

Urinary Tract Infections are common during pregnancy. Pregnant women are more prone to UTIs than non-pregnant women. It is a widely studied health problem and among 20% pregnant women were prone to urinary tract infections. [1]

Hormonal and mechanical changes increase the risk of urinary stasis and vesico-urethral re-flux. Higher level of hormone progesterone decreases the muscle tone of the ureter, causing them to dilate and slowing the flow of urine. [2] The upshot of these changes is that it takes longer time for urine to pass through the urinary tract, giving bacteria more time to multiply and it also becomes easier for bacteria to travel up the kidneys. During pregnancy the urine becomes less acidic and more likely to contain glucose, both of which boost the potential for bacterial growth.

In addition as the uterus grows, it presses on the bladder and can prevent complete emptying of urine. This stagnant urine is likely source of infection. These changes and difficulty with hygiene due to distended pregnant belly, increase the frequency of urinary tract infection in pregnant women. [3] In *Ayurveda*, due to *rookshaaaharasevana* (dry foods), *vegodharana* (suppressing natural urges), *srotorodha* (obstruction), *doshas* like *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha* get aggravated and causing urinary tract infections.

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In pregnant women, urinary tract infections should be treated to prevent complications such as the infection spreading to the kidneys, pyelonephritis & it increases risk of premature labour or having a low birth weight (LBW) baby & it has been linked to an increased risk of foetal & newborn mortality.

Classification

Urinary tract infections in pregnancy are classified as symptomatic and asymptomatic in pregnancy

Asymptomatic bacteriuria: Presence of small numbers of bacteria in urine and have no symptoms. This is significant in pregnancy [4]

Cystitis (Bladder infection): Commonly found in pregnancy. Typical symptoms are pain in lower abdomen, blood in urine and fever [5]

Pyelonephritis (Kidney infection): This is uncommon. During pregnancy, asymptomatic bacteriuria or cystitis, if left untreated significantly increases risk of getting kidney infection & is associated with preterm labour & low birth weight. This is one reason that urine is routinely tested during pregnancy.

Effect on foetus & mother-

Pyelonephritis

Preterm labour

Eclampsia & Pre eclampsia

Intra uterine growth Retardation

Low Birth Weight [6]

History of Symptoms-

Having burning sensation during urination.

Feeling of urgent need to urinate or frequent urination.

Having difficulty in urination.

Fever .

Cramps in lower back or lower abdomen.

presence of blood in urine [7]

Investigation

Routine Urine microscopic exam

Urine culture - most common organism is Escherichia coli, followed by staphylococcus saprophyticus, klebsiella & proteus.

Treatment

Antibiotics for 3 to 7 days depending on the severity of disease. But most of antibiotics are contraindicated during first trimester. Also excessive use of antibiotics may lead to teratogenicity.

Many herbs are useful in the urinary tract infection without any untoward effect on both mother & foetus.

Ayurvedic Treatment

Ayurveda can provide global solution in several diseases. It provide preventive approach & promotive health care. Also, Ayurveda has many significant drugs, which can prevent and cure urinary tract infection.

It includes

Garbhiniparicharya

Grishmarutuchrayapalan[8]

Sheet parisheka, Avgah, Sheetallepa[9]

Takra pan[10], Ekshurasa pan [11]

Shatavaryadisarpi, Narikeladiyoga, Trinpanchamoola yoga, darbhool, madhuk, usheer, kantakbeejshirpaka, Decoction of gokshur, varuna, sarivamusta, punarnava Chandanasava, Usheerasava, Chandraprabhavati[12], pashanbheda Shatavari .[13]

For avoidance of UTI during pregnancy-

Take steps to minimize the chances of getting urinary tract infection.

- 1] Drink plenty of water, atleast 8 to 10 glasses a day.
- 2] Don't ignore the urge to pee.
- 3] Keep the genital area clean with mild soap & water.
- 4] Clean the genital area before & after urination & intercourse.
- 5] Don't use douches, powder, deodorant spray during pregnancy.
- 6] Cotton underwear & loose fitting pants should be worn.
- 7] Avoid spicy food, alcohols and include high amounts of fibers and liquids in diet.
- 8] Practice yoga and pranayama which are safe in pregnancy to improve the immunity.

Conclusion

Urinary infection is commonly found in pregnancy. If it is untreated, some urine infections may cause serious kidney infections and it may also cause problem such as preterm labour and/or small baby. Ayurveda can play important role in urinary tract infection care through a combination of proper aahara (diet), Vihara (exercise) and Aushadhi (medicine). So, by follow proper garbhiniparicharya and use of ayurvedic herbs we can treat Urinary infection and prevent pregnancy.

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