



**Review Article**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH AND POSTNATAL CARE: AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE**

**Aswathi Sara Varghese**

Associate Professor, Prasuti Tantra Evam Stree Roga Department, KMCT Ayurveda Medical College, Calicut, India.

**Article info**

**Article History:**

Received: 19-02-2026

Accepted: 22-03-2026

Published: 10-04-2026

**KEYWORDS:**

*Sutika Paricharya, Ahara, Aushadha, Vihara.*

**ABSTRACT**

In Ayurveda, women are regarded as the cornerstone of family life due to their vital role in reproduction and nurturing children. As the foundation of society, a woman's health directly influences the well-being of future generations. Therefore, maintaining her physical and mental health is essential for a healthy family and, ultimately, a healthy society. In Ayurvedic classics, *Sutika Paricharya* (postnatal care) is described in detail and includes *Ahara* (diet), *Aushadha* (medications), and *Vihara* (lifestyle regimens). These guidelines are recommended for a duration ranging from one and a half months up to six months, with the aim of restoring the overall health of the postnatal woman.

**INTRODUCTION**

A woman is a unique creation of God, blessed with the invaluable gift of motherhood. In Ayurveda, women are regarded as the cornerstone of family life due to their vital role in reproduction and nurturing children. As the foundation of society, a woman's health directly influences the well-being of future generations. Therefore, maintaining her physical and mental health is essential for a healthy family and, ultimately, a healthy society. In the modern era, however, significant lifestyle changes have impacted women's health. Increased stress levels, demanding work environments, and the growing number of working women often result in neglect of proper postnatal care. Traditional practices and regimens that were once carefully followed after childbirth are now frequently overlooked, which can lead to adverse health effects. According to Ayurvedic principles, a woman in the postnatal period, referred to as *Sutika*, undergoes a state of physical depletion after delivery. This condition arises due to the intense exertion of labor pain and the loss of *Rakta* (blood) and *Kleda* (bodily fluids). As a result, the mother becomes weak and fatigued, requiring specialized care, proper nutrition, and adequate rest to restore her strength and balance. Modern medical science also emphasizes the critical nature of maternal health.

The 10<sup>th</sup> revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) defines maternal death as the death of a woman during pregnancy or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, regardless of the duration or location of the pregnancy. Globally, the maternal mortality ratio remains a serious concern, estimated at approximately 400 per 100,000 live births. This highlights the urgent need to address maternal health issues comprehensively. Integrating traditional knowledge systems like Ayurveda with modern healthcare practices can provide a more holistic approach to maternal care. Such integration can help ensure better postnatal recovery, reduce complications, and ultimately contribute to lowering maternal mortality rates.

In conclusion, safeguarding women's health, especially during the postnatal period, is not only a medical necessity but also a social responsibility. A healthy mother leads to a healthy family, which in turn builds a strong and thriving society. A woman after the delivery of a baby, followed by the expulsion of the placenta, is termed as *Sutika*. During this period, the *Sutika* experiences both physical and mental fatigue and often becomes weak or emaciated due to the loss of blood and bodily fluids during childbirth<sup>[1]</sup>. In the *Sutika kala* (postnatal period), various psychosomatic changes occur, leading to a state of *Aptarpana* (depletion or undernourishment) in the mother. This condition results in *Vata vridhhi* (aggravation of *Vata dosha*), which is responsible for the development of various health problems<sup>[2]</sup>.

| Access this article online  |   |
|---|---|
| Quick Response Code   |   |
|   | <a href="https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v14i4.4084">https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v14i4.4084</a> |
| Published by Mahadev Publications (Regd.)<br>publication licensed under a Creative Commons<br>Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0<br>International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) |   |

*Prasava* (labor) is a strenuous process that leads to *Dhatu Kshaya* (depletion of body tissues), resulting in a reduction of *Bala* (physical strength) in the woman. This highlights the need for specialized and attentive care for both the mother and the newborn after delivery. In Ayurvedic classics, *Sutika Paricharya* (postnatal care) is described in detail and includes *Ahara* (diet), *Aushadha* (medications), and *Vihara* (lifestyle regimens). These guidelines are recommended for a duration ranging from one and a half months up to six months, with the aim of restoring the overall health of the postnatal woman. By properly following these regimens, the mother achieves *Dhatu Paripoornata* (replenishment of body tissues) and gradually returns to her pre-pregnancy state of health and well-being.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To review the classical literature related to *Sutika*, *Sutika Kala*, and *Sutika Paricharya*.

- To analyse the concepts of *Pathya* (wholesome practices) and *Apathya* (unwholesome practices) in *Sutika Paricharya*.
- To evaluate the clinical significance of *Sutika Paricharya* in the management and restoration of postnatal health.

**METHODOLOGY**

A comprehensive review of the literature related to *Sutika Paricharya* was undertaken from classical Ayurvedic texts. Relevant chapters and references from Bruhatrayi, Laghutrayi, and other important Samhitas were carefully collected, analysed, and compiled. The extracted information was systematically organized to consolidate the concepts and present them in a structured manner within the manuscript.

**RESULTS**

**Sutika**

A woman who has delivered a baby and subsequently expelled the placenta is referred to as *Sutika* (puerperal woman)<sup>[1,3]</sup>.

**Table 1: Sutika Kala**

| Ayurvedic classic text   | Sutika Kala  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Srusrutha samhita</i> | After following 1½ months of regulated diet and lifestyle, a woman is considered free from the status of <i>Sutika</i> . However, some scholars opine that a woman should continue to be regarded as a <i>Sutika</i> until the resumption of her menstrual cycle. <sup>[3]</sup> |
| <i>Astanga Hridaya</i>   | 1½ month <sup>[4]</sup>  |
| <i>Kashayapa samhita</i> | Six months <sup>[5]</sup>  |
| <i>Yoga Ratnakar</i>     | Special dietetic management for 1 month <sup>[6]</sup>   |
| <i>Bhavprakash</i>       | 4 months <sup>[7]</sup>  |

**Review of Puerperium**

The puerperium is the period immediately following childbirth, typically encompassing the first few weeks after delivery. While the exact duration may vary, it is generally considered to last between 4 and 6 weeks<sup>[8]</sup>. The puerperium, or postpartum period, extends from the delivery of the placenta up to six weeks after childbirth. During this time, the genital organs gradually return to their pre-pregnancy anatomical and physiological state. For effective postpartum management, this period can be subdivided into three phases:

Immediate Puerperium – The first 24 hours following delivery

Early Puerperium – The first week after delivery

Remote Puerperium – From the second week up to six weeks post-delivery. <sup>[9]</sup>

**Sutika Paricharya Sidhanta (Principles of Sutika Paricharya)**

The principles of *Sutika Paricharya* (postnatal care) are designed to restore the physical and mental health of the mother after childbirth. Key treatment objectives include:

*Ashwasana* – Providing emotional support and reassurance to the mother.

*Sutika Abhyanga* – Postnatal massage to restore strength and circulation.

*Deepana* – Stimulation of digestive fire.

*Pachana* – Enhancement of digestion and metabolism.

*Garbhasaya Sodhana* and *Kleda Soshana* – Cleansing of the uterus and absorption of excess fluids.

*Soola Prashamana* – Relief from pain and discomfort

*Vata Anulomana* – Regulation of *Vata dosha*.

*Bala vridhi* – Strengthening of physical power and immunity.

*Stanya Janana* – Promotion of lactation

*Brihmana*– Nourishment and tissue rejuvenation

**Sutika Paricharya is classified into two types**

*Samanya Sutika Paricharya* (General Postnatal Care)

General postnatal care encompasses three major aspects:

*Ahara* – Regulated diet to restore energy and tissues.

*Aushadha*– Appropriate medicines for postnatal recovery. *Vihara*– Lifestyle and daily routines that support physical and mental well-being.

**Table 2: Samanya Sutika Paricharya as per different Samhitas**

| Texts                           | Days   | Ahara and Aushadha  | Vihara  |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Charaka Samhita <sup>[10]</sup> | 5-7day   | 1) One of the <i>Chatursneha</i> with <i>Panchakola curna</i><br>2) <i>Yavagu</i> with <i>Pippaliyadi churna</i>  | 1) <i>Abhyanga</i> with <i>Gheetaila</i><br>2) <i>Parisheka- ushnodaka</i><br>3) <i>Udaravestana</i>  |
| Sushruta <sup>[11]</sup>        | 2-3 days<br><br>3 or 4 -6 or 7 Days<br>8th day   | 1) <i>Vatahara kashaya pana</i><br>2) <i>Ushna gudodaka</i> with <i>Churnas</i> of <i>Pippali mula, Hastipippali, Chithraka, Srngavera</i><br>1) <i>Sneha yavagu/Ksheera yavagu</i> with <i>Vidarigana dravyas</i><br>1) <i>Jangal mamsarasa</i> processed with <i>Yava, Kola, Kulatha yusha</i><br>3) <i>Shali odana bhojana</i> | 1) <i>Balataila abhyanga</i><br>2) <i>Parisheka</i> with <i>Vatahara dravyas (Bhadra darvadi gana)</i>  |
| Ashtangahyrdya <sup>[12]</sup>  | 3 or 5 or 7 days   | 1) <i>Snehapana</i> with <i>Panchakola churna</i> with <i>Saindhava</i><br>2) <i>Sneha ayogya-Vatahara/ Laghupanchamoola kwatha pana</i><br>3) <i>Ksheera yavagu pana-Vidaryadigana siddha</i>  | 1) <i>Balataila abhyanga</i><br>2) <i>Sthanika Udara abhyanga-Grita/Taila</i><br>3) <i>Udarvesthana</i><br>4) <i>Ushnodaka parisheka</i>                            |
| Kashayapa <sup>[13]</sup>       | 3-5 5-7<br><br>7-12<br>12 days-<br>1 month   | 1) <i>Manda pana</i><br>2) <i>Snehapana (Tailaghrta)</i><br>3) <i>Snehayukta yavagu pana-Pippali, Nagara-Lavana Rahita Yavagu Snehayukta yavagu pana-with Lavana</i><br>1) <i>Kulatha yusha</i><br>2) <i>Jangala mamsarasa</i><br>3) <i>Gritha bharjita shaka</i>   | 1) <i>Bala taila prishekam</i><br>2) <i>Dhupana</i> with <i>Ghrta</i> prepared with <i>Kushta, Guggulu, Aguru</i><br><br><i>Snehana, Swedana, Ushna jala sevana</i> |
| Harita <sup>[14]</sup>          | After <i>Prasava</i><br>1 <sup>st</sup> Day<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> Day<br><br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Day<br>4 <sup>th</sup> Day<br>5/10/15 days | <i>Kwatha pana-Lodhra, Arjuna Upavasa</i><br>1) <i>Guda, nagar, Haritaki sevana</i><br>2) <i>Ushna kulatha yusha sevana</i><br><i>Panchakola Yavagu pana</i><br><i>Chaturjata mishrita Yavagupana</i><br><i>Shali Shastik odana</i>   |   |

**Manidharana (Wearing of Amulet)**

During the postnatal period, the *Sutika* may wear a *Trivruta Mani* (amulet) over her head. This practice is believed to provide psychological comfort and a sense of protection to the mother during her recovery.

**Sutika Snana (Postnatal Bathing) <sup>[15]</sup>**

The postnatal bathing ceremony (*Sutika Snana*) is traditionally performed on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> day after

delivery, depending on family customs and local practices. This ritual not only ensures hygiene but also marks an important milestone in the mother's gradual reintegration into daily life.

**Visishta Paricharya<sup>[16]</sup>**

It is explained on the basis of *Desha* & gender of child.

| Desha   | Ahara   | Vihara                         |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>Anupa Desha</i>  | 1) <i>Manda prayoga</i> with <i>Agni-balavardhaka dravya</i><br>2) <i>Ushna dravya sevana</i> | <i>Swedana, Nivata Shayana</i> |
| <i>Jangala Desha</i> for 3-5 days<br><i>Sadharana Desha</i> | <i>Snehopachara</i><br>Neither too <i>Sneha</i> nor <i>Ruksha dravyas</i>                     | <i>Snehopachara</i>            |

*Visesha Sutika Paricharya* according to sex of child.

| Gender of child | Days     | Advice   |
|-----------------|----------|--|
| Male            | 5-7 days | 1) Tailapana<br>2) Deepaniya aushadhi samsakrita yavagupana  |
| Female          |          | 1) Ghritapana<br>2) Deepaniya aushadhi samsakrita yavagupana |
| In both sex     |          | Mandadi prayoga  |

### **Sutika paricharya for Videsha Jati**

Women of Mleccha caste and other foreigners should use blood, meat soups, eatable roots, rhizomes, and fruits during this period.

### **Pathya and Apathya Sutika<sup>[17]</sup>**

#### **Pathya (wholesome practices) for Sutika**

- The *Sutika* should bathe daily using plenty of warm water to ensure cleanliness and comfort.
- Only boiled water should be consumed for drinking to maintain hygiene.
- Bathing practices like *Parisheka* (sprinkling water) and *Avagahana* (immersion bath) should always use lukewarm water.
- *Udarveshtana* (abdominal care) should be performed as part of routine postnatal care.
- Daily *Snehana* (oleation) and *Swedana* (fomentation) are recommended, adjusted according to local climate and season.
- Kashyapa Samhita specifically recommends *Madana* for nourishment and recovery of the postnatal mother.

#### **Apathya for Sutika**

The following practices are considered harmful for a postnatal woman (*Sutika*) and should be strictly avoided:

- Physical and mental stress, as well as anger or excessive emotional strain.
- Consumption of cold water, cold wine, and other cold substances.
- Sexual intercourse during the postnatal period.
- Administration of *Panchakarma* procedures is contraindicated for the *Sutika*.
- Use of *Asthapana Basti* may aggravate *Ama Dosha* in the postnatal woman, leading to digestive disturbances.<sup>[18]</sup>
- *Nasya Karma* (nasal therapy) may cause emaciation, loss of appetite, and body aches in the *Sutika*.<sup>[19]</sup>

#### **Benefits of Sutika Paricharya<sup>[20]</sup>**

It can be concluded that a *Sutika*, who becomes weak due to fetal development, loss of *Dhatus* (body tissues), excretion of *Kleda* (bodily fluids) and blood, and exhaustion from labor, can regain her pre-pregnancy health and strength by following proper *Sutika Paricharya*.

The key benefits of postnatal care in Ayurveda can be summarized as follows:

- Strengthens the body and improves digestive power– Restores energy and promotes proper metabolism.
- Tones muscles, calms nerves, and lubricates joints– Supports physical recovery and mobility.
- Enhances psychological alertness, clarity of thought, and emotional stability– Aids mental and emotional well-being.
- Restores the body to its pre-pregnancy shape– Helps regain normal physique and posture.
- Facilitates effortless lactation and more restful feeding– Promotes adequate milk production and comfort during breastfeeding.

### **DISCUSSION**

Postnatal care is a critical aspect of maternal health, as the period following childbirth involves significant physical and physiological changes. Today, there is increasing awareness of the importance of quality care for mothers during this phase, with many turning to traditional systems like Ayurveda for guidance. In Ayurvedic texts, the postpartum woman, or *Sutika*, is described as a *Shoonya Sharira*- a body weakened due to the strain of pregnancy, loss of *Dhatus* (body tissues), and excretion of *Rakta* (blood) and *Kleda* (bodily fluids) during labor. This depletion can lead to fatigue, vulnerability to disease, and slower recovery if not properly addressed. To restore health and vitality, Ayurveda prescribes structured postnatal care (*Sutika Paricharya*), which is divided into two categories: *Samanya Paricharya* (general care) and *Visesha Paricharya* (specialized care). *Samanya Paricharya* provides universal guidance applicable to all postpartum women, focusing on strengthening the body, improving digestion, and promoting overall recovery. *Visesha Paricharya*, on the other hand, is individualized, taking into account factors such as the mother's residence (*Desha*), the sex of the newborn, and her social and economic conditions. This personalized care ensures that women with the capacity to follow specific recommendations receive optimal recovery support.

The three main components of *Sutika Paricharya* are:  
*Ahara* (Diet) – Nutritious foods to restore energy and body tissues.

*Vihara* (Regimen/Lifestyle)– Daily routines, massage, bathing, and rest to support physical and mental recovery.

*Aushadha* (Medicines)– Herbal formulations and therapeutic interventions to strengthen the body, regulate doshas, and promote lactation.

By combining these approaches, Ayurveda provides a comprehensive framework to restore the mother's physical strength, mental stability, and overall well-being, helping her return to her pre-pregnancy health while supporting successful lactation and nurturing of the newborn.

### CONCLUSION

The postnatal period, or *Sutika Kala*, is a highly vulnerable and transformative phase for a woman's body and mind. It demands targeted care to restore physical strength, balance the aggravated *Vata*, and support overall health. Proper management through a balanced diet (*Ahara*), regulated lifestyle (*Vihara*), and therapeutic interventions (*Aushadhi*) is essential during this time. Effective postnatal care not only accelerates the mother's recovery but also promotes optimal growth and well-being of the newborn. Therefore, individualized and systematic attention during *Sutika Kala* is crucial for the health of both mother and child.

### REFERENCES

1. Agnivesha Acharya, Caraka Samhita (Part -1), Revised by Caraka and Drdhabala with Introduction by Vaidya Samrata-Sri Satya Narayana Sastri with Elaborated Commentary by Pt. Kasinatha Sastri and Dr. Gorakha Natha Chaturvedi, Edited by Pt. Rajeswaradatta Sastri et al., Publisher- Chaukhambha Bharati Academy Varanasi, Reprint Edition 2005, Sutra Sthana, Chapter-1, Deerghajivitiya adhyaya, Sloka No. 15, Page No. 7.
2. P.V.Tewari, Kasyapa-Samhita or Vrddhajivkiya Tantra, Edited by Prof. P.V. Tewari, Translation and Commentary by Prof. P.V. Tewari, Publisher-Chaukhambha Visva Bharati Varanasi, Edition: Reprint 2013, Khila Sthana, Chapter-11, Sutiko-pakramaniya adhyaya, Verse 6, Page No. 576
3. Ambikadutta shastri (editor). Sushruta Samhita, sharira sthana, chap-10, Bharati Chaukhambha Subharti Prakashana, Varanasi 2010; p.103

4. Premavati Tiwari, Ayurveda Prasuti Tantra evam Stri Roga, part 2, chap-9, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Chaukhambha Orientalia Varanasi. 1996; p.569
5. Satyapala bhigacharya (editor), KashyapaSamhita (Vridha Jeevaka), Khilasthana, chap-11, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. 1994; p.305
6. Sartha Yogaratnakar, Datto Ballala Borkar, translator, vol 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sutika Roga Chikitsa, chap-44, Shri Gajanana Book Depo Prakashana, Pune,1984; p.639.
7. 7Purushottamnanal, editor, Sartha Bhavaprakash, Purva Khanda, chap-3, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Shri Gajanana Book Depo, Pune, 1929; p.42
8. Cunniggham, Leveno, Bloom. Williams Obstetrics, 23<sup>rd</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill companies US, chapter-30. Page no. 646.
9. Prof. Sudha Salhan, Textbook of Obstetrics, Published by Jaypee Brothers, Medical Publishers (P) Ltd. New Delhi, First Edition, 2007, Chapter-69, Puerperium, Page no. 597
10. Yadavaji Trikamaji, Charaka Samhita, of Agnivesha, Chaukhambha Orientalia, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2001, pg-348.
11. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, by-Acharya Yadavaji Trikamaji, pub-Chaukhambha Orientalia, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005, pg-389
12. Shivprasad sharma, editor. Ashtangasangraha of vridha vagbhata, Sharira sthana; chapter 3, verse 37. Varanasi, Chaukhambha Sanskrit series; 1st edition, p. 295
13. Pandit Hemaraj Sharma, Kashyapa Samhita, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, 10th edition, 2005, pg-306
14. Acharya Ramavalamba Shastri, Harita Samhita with Nirmala Hindi Commentary, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Prachya prakashana, Varanasi, 1985, pg-104.
15. Kashinath Shastri, Asthanga Sangraha of Vagbhata, pub-Chaukhambha Orientalia, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, 2005; p.376.
16. Satyapala bhigacharya (editor), Kashyapa Samhita (Vridha Jeevaka), Khilasthana, chap-11, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.2001.
17. Srivastava Sarika et. al., Role of Shigru in Management of Sutika- Arti (puerperal-discomfort) Department of Prasuti Tantra, IMS, BHU, Varanasi, 2000; p.17-18
18. Acharya Kashinath Shastri, Gorakhanath Chaturvedi, Charaka Samhita with Vidyotini Hindi Commentary, Sharirasthana 8/48, 16<sup>th</sup> ed; Chaukhambha Bharti Academy, Varanasi. 1989; p.892
19. S.P. Sharma, Astanga Sangraha, Sutrasthana 29/11, 1st edition, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 2006; p.218
20. S.P. Sharma, Astanga Sangraha, Sharirasthana 3/39, 1st edition, Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 2006; p.285

#### Cite this article as:

Aswathi Sara Varghese. Women's Health and Postnatal Care: An Ayurvedic Perspective. International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research. 2026;14(4):187-191.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v14i4.4084>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

#### \*Address for correspondence

**Dr. Aswathi Sara Varghese**

Associate Professor,

Prasuti Tantra Evam Stree Roga

Department,

KMCT Ayurveda Medical College, Calicut.

Email: [aswathisara88@gmail.com](mailto:aswathisara88@gmail.com)

Disclaimer: IJAPR is solely owned by Mahadev Publications - dedicated to publish quality research, while every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of the content published in our Journal. IJAPR cannot accept any responsibility or liability for the articles content which are published. The views expressed in articles by our contributing authors are not necessarily those of IJAPR editor or editorial board members.