

## Papaya and its benefits

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### Introduction

Fruits are an important component in the nutritional diet of human beings which contains various essential nutrients, minerals, enzymes including potassium, dietary fiber, iron and folate (folic acid), etc. India is the second-largest producer of fruits globally, accounting for nearly 10% of total global production and leading in the production of several fruit crops like mango, banana, papaya, cashew-nuts and areca nut etc. Papaya is a very common tropical fruit. Its center of origin is in Central America but now it's being cultivated in almost all the tropical and subtropical countries. It was the 16<sup>th</sup> century when papaya was introduced in India from Malaysia and now India alone producing almost 50 percent of world papaya. Scientifically it's known as *Carica papaya* and belongs to the *Caricaceae* family.

The papaya plant is full of medicinal properties every part of the plant is used for one or another medicinal purpose. Papaya is full of numerous nutrition and elements which makes it helpful in intestinal gastrointestinal discomfort, cardiovascular problems, viral infection, dengue, kidney disorders, cancer, liver detoxification, bacterial infection, diabetes ulcer and sores, inflammation, etc. papaya is in natural contraception for men, high in proteolytic enzymes, and improve digestion. Now we will see it from the nutritive value points which protect us from the various diseases.

- **Beta carotene** - It is the precursor of vitamin A. Vitamin A is very necessary for maintaining night vision its deficiency causes a disease called night blindness or rataundhi. If we consume a higher amount it also fights against asthma and various



types of cancers if consumed in the early stage of life, that's why papaya must be added implant in children's diet.

- **Vitamin B** - Vitamin B in papaya are Folic acid, pyridoxine (Vit. B6), riboflavin and thiamine. These are called essential elements because our bodies can't synthesize themselves and are required from the outer source. Everybody part from your head down to toes get benefited from vitamin B
- **Vitamin K**- Vitamin K prevents blood clotting that's why it is very beneficial for heart patients. It is very necessary for the absorption of calcium and prevents urinary loss of it and thus it improves the bone strength and calcium uptake of the body.
- **Zeaxanthin** - It is a very powerful antioxidant that helps in maintaining normal vision. This antioxidant checks the ultraviolet rays and protects our retina.
- **Papain and hymopapain** - It is found in an ample amount in milky latex excreted from the raw papaya fruit and plant parts on the injury. Basically, papain is a proteolytic enzyme That is used for many medicinal purposes. It is a remedy to reduce pain, inflammation, swelling, helminthic and amoebic infections, diarrhea, and allergies. Papaya is a storehouse of Cancer-fighting antioxidants and enzymes.
- **Lycopene** - It is a pigment that is also found in tomatoes that imparts its characteristic reddish yellow color to the fruit. It is very necessary for our body cell membrane integrity and maintenance that's why it is useful for skin and hair problems full stop its consumption enhances the skin glow, keratin and collagen quality. Lycopene also has its anti-cancer properties due to the function of cell cycle regulation by inhibiting abnormal cellular growth.

Other than these there are numerous benefits of papaya. Papaya leaves are being used since time immemorial in traditional medicines and home remedies. Dengue comes every year and takes several lives in poor and mediocre societies. According to medical reports,



25ml of leaf extracts were given to the patient in the morning, and the evening and it was observed that platelet count increased from 73000 /microlitre to 120000/microlitre just in 24 hours.

➤ **Papaya leaf extract preparation and use method**

- ❖ Collect some mature leaves from the middle of the plant canopy.
- ❖ Wash it properly to remove dust and chemicals from both sides,
- ❖ Grind it and have its extract using a muslin cloth.
- ❖ Add some sugar in 25 ml leaf extract to reduce its bitterness.
- ❖ Leaf extract is quite bitter and it may cause vomiting to some people so fruit juice can be recommended with it.
- ❖ Consume it twice a day for five consecutive days.

➤ **Get papaya leaves at home**

Papaya is a heavy feeder and grows 3-4 m tall. Commercially grown papaya variety in northern India is Red lady. It is a heavy bearer hence it can't be grown in pots and rooftop gardens. There is a variety named Pusa Nanha and Pusa Dwarf that can be grown in pots of the size 18 inches and above. In the field also this variety can be planted with the spacing of 1.2 m \* 1.2 m. Economical life of the papaya plant is 3-4 years only. With proper care and management enough leaves and be recovered for protective measure purposes.