



The Papaya Book

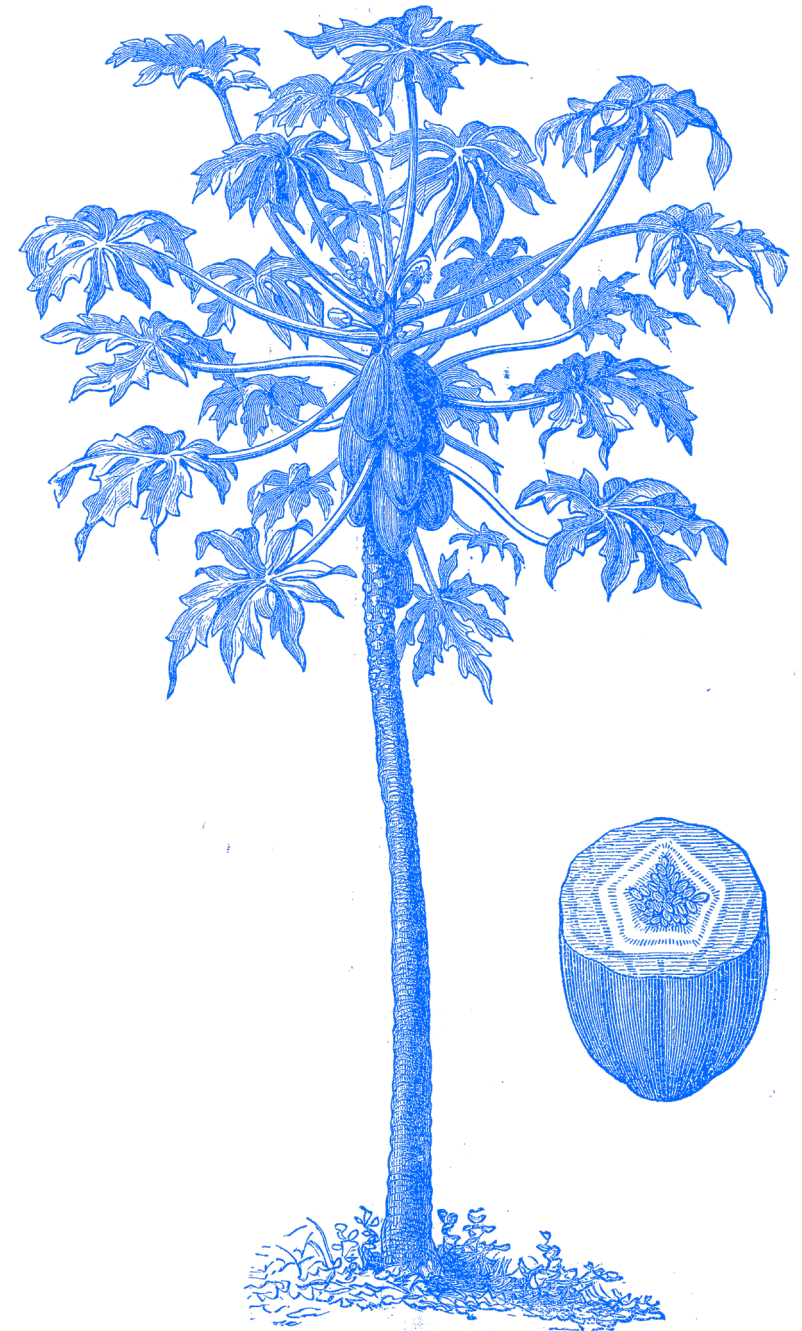


The superfruit for women's health

The Tree of Health

It is said that the term papaya is derived from the Arawakan language of the Central American Arawak peoples, who referred to it as the **“tree of health.”** It belongs to the family Caricaceae and is native to Mexico. Nowadays, the papaya is cultivated in tropical and subtropical areas such as Australia, India, Central and South America, and Africa. Papayas are semi-woody, evergreen trees. It can reach a height of 3 to 4 m in a pot, but it can grow much taller in its natural environment.

The papaya plant has an abundance of milky sap throughout, and a particularly shallow, widely spread root system. The long-stalked, papaya leaves alternate to form a tree crown. The leaves growing further down the trunk, die back and leave behind leaf scars. The papaya leaves can easily grow to over half a metre long, with each deeply lobed leaf form resembling a spread hand.



The Papaya Flower

Papaya flowers come in a pleasing variety of shapes and colours. Depending on the species, they can be white, yellow or cream-coloured. *Carica papaya*, the most common species, has small white star-shaped flowers that resemble propellers. Papaya flowers conveniently grow from the leaf scars of the dead leaves. Both papaya flowers and fruits can be found on one plant at the same time. Papayas are dioecious plants – this means that a plant bears either exclusively male or female flowers. As a result, successful fertilisation requires two papaya plants of opposite sexes.

After 10 to 14 months, the first flowers emerge and soon thereafter, the tree bears its first fruits. The oval papaya fruits have a yellow-green skin and weigh 500 g to 5 kg, depending on the species. Interestingly, since the difference between fruit and vegetable is sometimes vague, the papaya cannot be precisely classified as either! Unripe papaya is cooked like a vegetable, whereas the ripe papaya is eaten raw and is known for its sweet taste. At first, the fruit's flesh is white, but it eventually turns yellowish-orange or red as it ripens. The fruit's cavity is filled with an abundance of black seeds. They are around the size of peppercorns and are rarely eaten.

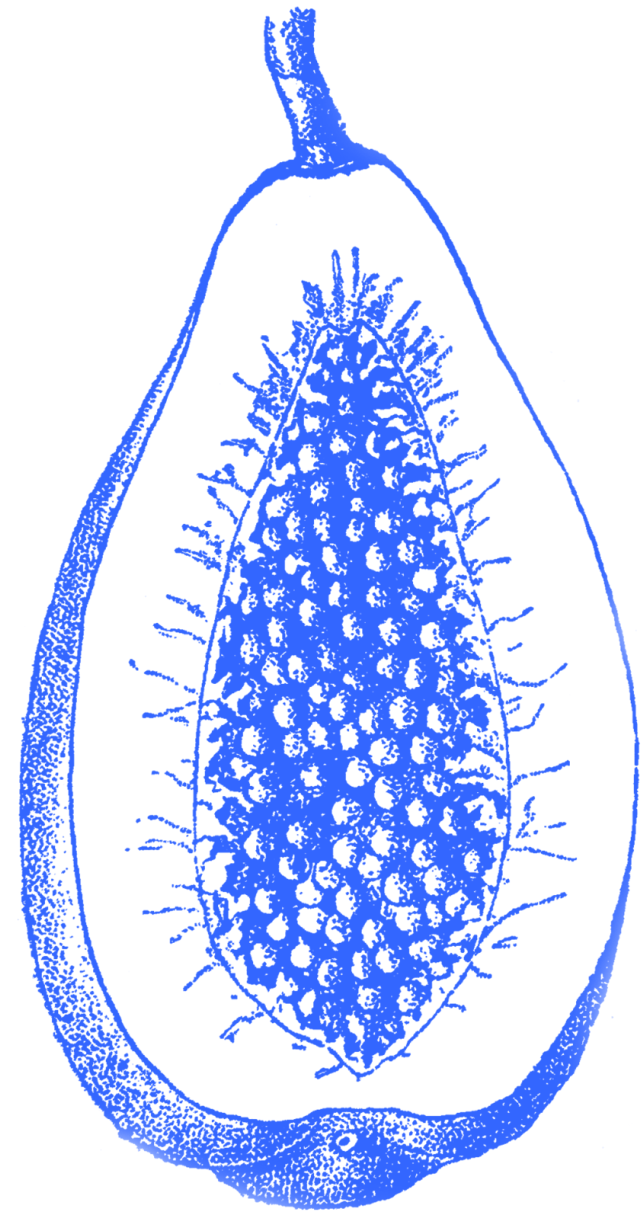


Papayas are the New Superfruit?

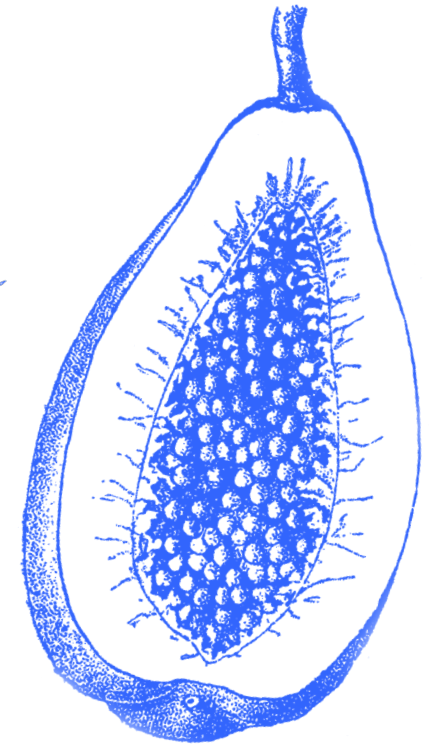
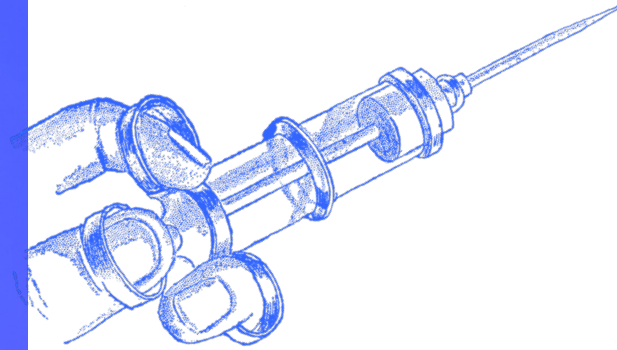
Papayas are high in fiber, which is essential for regulating digestion and promoting feelings of satiety (so you're more likely to stop eating when you're full and happy—not sick and stuffed). Papayas are also 88 percent water, which helps with motility (check out more healthy foods that can keep you hydrated and regular). A high-fiber diet is also known to support healthy blood sugar, making papaya even more helpful for lowering cholesterol levels. Plus, your immune system is also housed in your gut, so a healthy gut can keep you healthy overall.

Speaking of supporting a healthy immune system, papaya has been heralded as an immunostimulant (quite literally, substances that help activate the immune system). They're a great source of beta carotene, an antioxidant that's been shown to support immune health. Also, as Manaker mentions, one serving of papaya (about one small fruit) contains more than your daily value of vitamin C.

Last but not least, papayas are not only healthy. With the fruit, medical professionals are able to support women's rights around the world, because...



*...papayas
are similar
to the
uterus of
a pregnant
woman.*



The papaya resembles a pregnant uterus, so much so that people around the world are using the fruit to learn a method of modern reproductive health care: manual vacuum aspiration, or MVA, a low-risk, low-tech method of first-trimester abortion that requires little or no anesthesia.

This makes it possible, without much medical equipment,

to safely perform abortions and protect and improve the lives of many women.

MVA with a hand-held syringe and plastic cannula should be the standard treatment for any „pregnancy loss“ worldwide, including miscarriages, and can therefore be performed even in countries where abortion is banned. A 2022 World Health Organization report concluded, „abortion care can be safely provided by any properly trained **health care provider**, such as midwives, nurse practitioners, clinicians, physician assistants, family caregivers, and others.“

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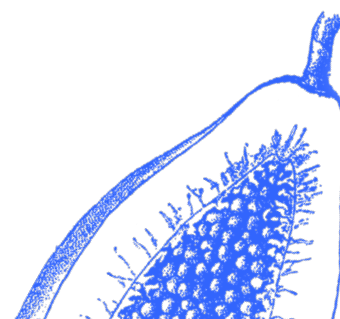
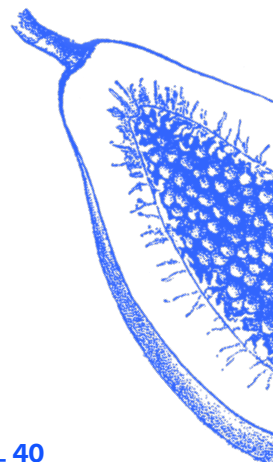
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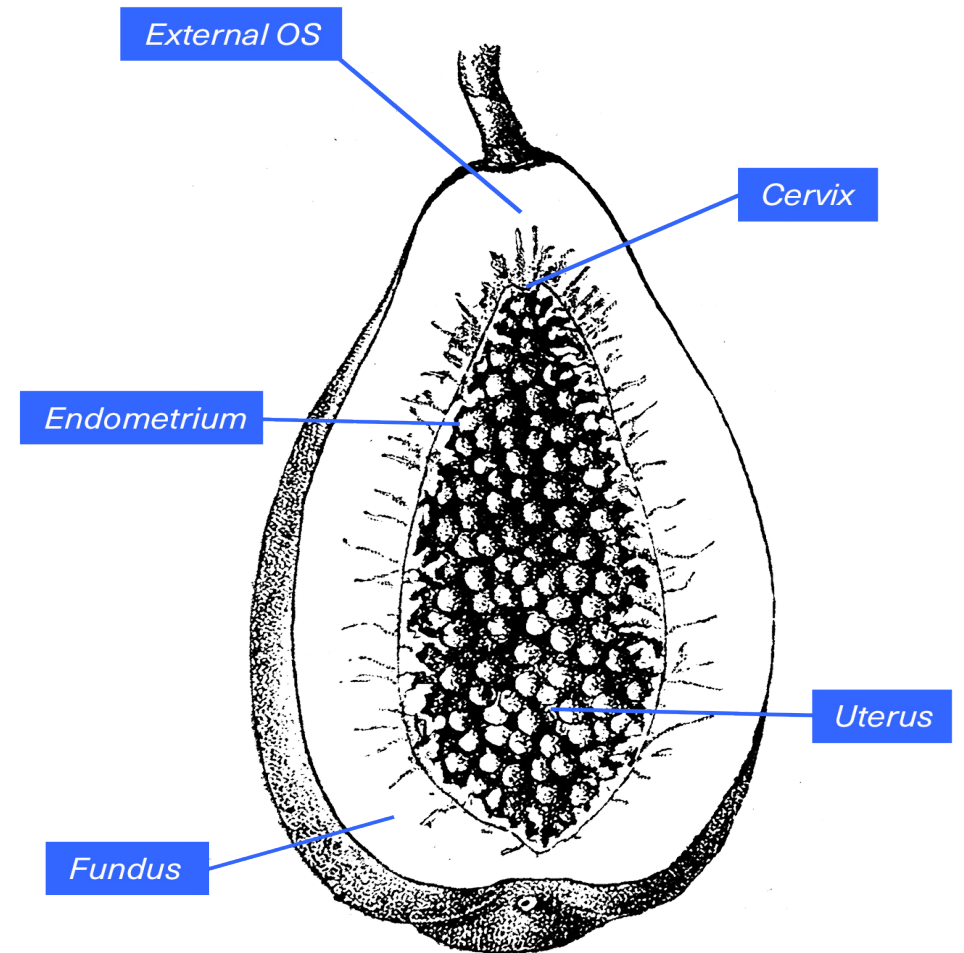
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Papayas are a good learning model for health professionals to learn safe abortion methods

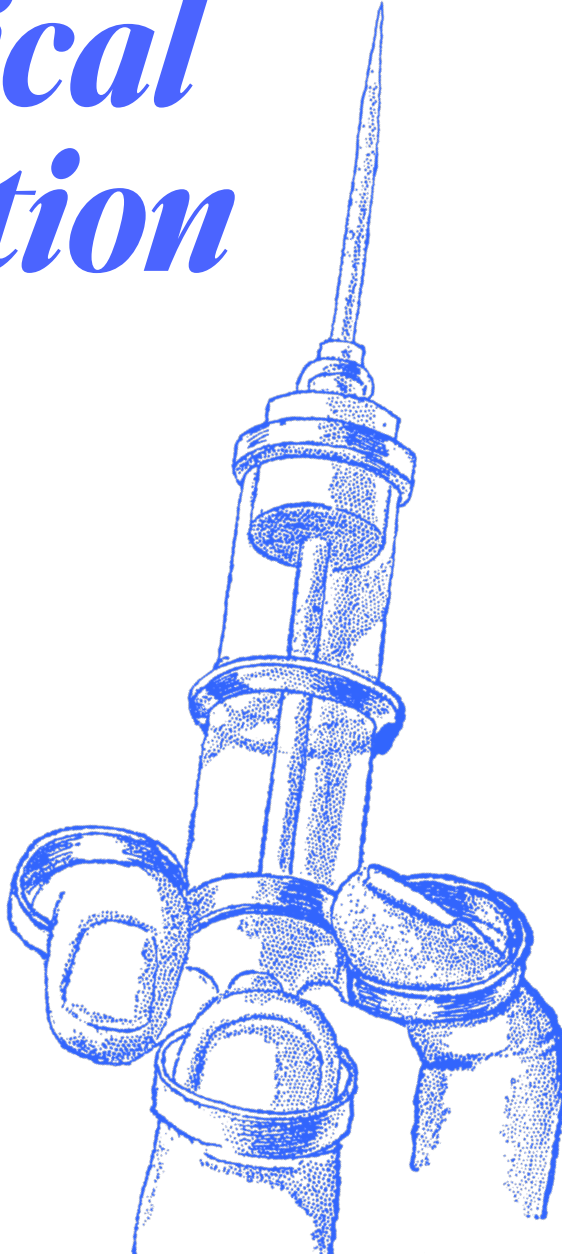
The model of the papaya resembles the anatomy of a woman's uterus. The stem of a papaya is relatively similar to the cervix of a uterus and the shape is also very similar to the uterus. The stem of the papaya is similar to the cervix of the uterus. The thicker part of the papaya resembles the upper part of the uterus - called the fundus. The fruit inside the papaya is similar to the endometrium.

This similarity of the papaya to a uterus makes it possible to safely practice the methods of abortion and miscarriage. Because the methods to treat heavy bleeding and pregnancy loss are the same methods used in abortion and therefore a life-saving method. With the help of papayas, you can practice using the instruments carefully and practice the appropriate procedures.



Visualization of a uterus on a papaya

Methods of Surgical Abortion



Vacuum Aspiration

The provision of vacuum aspiration includes the assessment of gestational age, cervical priming (if needed), the actual procedure, pain management including the provision of a paracervical block and the assessment of completeness of abortion through the visual inspection of products of conception. Health workers with the skills to perform a bimanual pelvic examination to diagnose and date a pregnancy, and to perform a transcervical procedure such as intrauterine device (IUD) insertion, can be trained to perform vacuum aspiration.

Recommended methods of surgical abortion at later gestational ages are vacuum aspiration and dilatation and evacuation (D&E). Although the recommendations in this section indicate differences before and after 14 weeks of gestation, it should be noted that there is flexibility in the use of one surgical method versus the other between the gestational ages of 12 and 16 weeks.

✓ **Recommend vacuum aspiration**

✗ **No recommendation of dilation and sharp curettage**

The Golden Rules of Abortion Messages

Key Messages

1 All people have the right to make decisions about their own bodies and decide if, when and how to have a child.

2 Abortion is a common and safe medical procedure.

3 Unsafe abortion is a public health concern, and young people are amongst the most vulnerable.

4 Legal, accessible and safe abortion saves people's lives. Medical complications and maternal mortality related to abortion can only truly be overcome if when people have access to safe abortion services.

5 We protect people from reproductive coercion and interference in their reproductive lives. It is important to provide people with healthcare to ensure their health and safety and protect them from harm.

Guide to avoiding stigmatizing language

Language and the way patients are treated can have a major impact on their mental health. For this reason, stigmatizing language should be avoided. Words such as child, baby or mother should not be used. For this reason, here are a few words that should not be used.

Good communication involves clear language that can be easily understood by your intended audience. Make sure you spell out all acronyms the first time they are used. While you may use these acronyms frequently, your audience may not be familiar with them. Even if your audience is highly educated, you should still keep your language as simple as possible. Avoid using jargon that people are not familiar with. Use concrete phrases and terms that people use in their everyday language. The challenge is to remain as simple, yet as accurate, as possible.

Recommended

- ✓ End a pregnancy / Have an abortion / Voluntary interruption of pregnancy / Not moving through a full pregnancy
- ✓ Pregnant woman / Partner of a pregnant woman
- ✓ Choose to move through a full pregnancy / Continue the pregnancy
- ✓ Embryo (up to week 10 gestation) / Fetus (from week 10 gestation on) / The pregnancy
- ✓ Choose to move through a full pregnancy / Continue the pregnancy
- ✓ Abortion in second/ third trimester/ Abortion at xx weeks gestation
- ✓ Consequences / Dealing with the consequences

Not Recommended

- ✗ Abort a child
- ✗ Mother/father/parent
- ✗ Keep the baby / Keep the child
- ✗ Baby / Dead fetus / Unborn baby
- ✗ Keep the baby / Keep the child / Unborn child
- ✗ Late term abortion
- ✗ N/A

The superfruit for women's health

Papayas are vitamin C bombs. This exotic fruit, however, is not only limited to enriching your diet! By using the superfruit properly, infections can be prevented and the lives of many women be improved.

