



YOUR MOTHER WASN'T WRONG:

YOU REALLY DO NEED TO WASH YOUR PRODUCE

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“Wash your fruits and vegetables.”

Your mother said it. Food-safety professionals say it. And food-service establishments are expected to make produce washing part of their safe food-handling procedures.

Fresh produce may look clean, but soil, handling residues and contaminants can remain on its surface. This is especially important with leafy vegetables, where tightly layered leaves and irregular surfaces can make thorough cleaning more challenging.

One Packs® Veggie Prep™ Fruit and Vegetable Wash from Stearns Packaging is formulated to support a thorough produce-washing process in commercial kitchens and food-service operations.



Why Produce Washing Matters

Fresh fruits and vegetables may be exposed to contaminants during growing, harvesting, packing, transportation, storage and preparation. Washing produce cannot eliminate every food-safety risk, but careful handling, agitation and rinsing can help reduce surface soil, residues, debris and some contaminants.

One potential concern is *Cyclospora cayetanensis*, the microscopic, single-celled parasite that causes cyclosporiasis.

Cyclospora is not a bacterium or virus. It is a protozoan parasite that produces environmentally resistant oocysts. These oocysts may be present on contaminated fresh produce and can be difficult to remove completely, particularly from leafy vegetables and produce with uneven surfaces.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend thoroughly washing fruits and vegetables under clean running water before eating, cutting or cooking them. However, washing alone cannot guarantee the complete removal of Cyclospora. ([CDC](#))



How Veggie Prep Supports the Washing Process

Veggie Prep contains citric acid and surfactants and is designed to help loosen surface soil, residues, debris and other contaminants so they can be carried away during rinsing.

The combined physical process is important:

Agitation helps dislodge material from produce surfaces and between leaves.

Surfactants help loosen and lift surface soil and residues.

Citric acid supports the product's produce-cleaning formula.

Clean running water flushes away loosened material.

Veggie Prep should not be described as killing Cyclospora or guaranteeing its removal. Instead, it supports the essential washing, agitation and rinsing process that may help reduce exposure to surface contamination.



A Thorough Produce-Washing Process

Always follow the Veggie Prep label directions and your facility's established food-safety procedures.

Begin by washing your hands and preparing a clean sink, basin or food-safe produce-washing area. Keep produce separated from raw meat, poultry, seafood and their utensils or preparation surfaces.

Remove and discard damaged, bruised or spoiled portions. For lettuce, cabbage and similar vegetables, remove the damaged and outer leaves before washing.

Prepare the Veggie Prep solution according to the product label. Completely submerge the produce for approximately 30 seconds to one minute.

Agitate the produce thoroughly so the solution reaches in between and around individual pieces, between leaves and across uneven surfaces. Firm produce may be scrubbed with a clean produce brush when appropriate.

For an especially thorough cleaning process, produce may be washed, agitated or scrubbed up to three times, provided this is consistent with the product directions and the food's handling requirements.

Always finish by rinsing the produce completely with clean running water. Do not allow the washing solution or loosened material to remain on the food.



Washing Reduces Risk—It Does Not Eliminate It

Thorough produce washing is an important risk-reduction step, but no washing method can guarantee the complete removal of *Cyclospora* or all microorganisms.

Chemical sanitizing or disinfecting treatments may not completely eliminate *Cyclospora*, and contaminated or recalled produce should never be considered safe simply because it has been washed. Do not serve or consume recalled produce. Follow all current CDC, FDA and local public-health instructions. ([CDC](#))

For food-service professionals, produce washing is part of responsible food preparation. The FDA Food Code states that raw fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly washed before they are cut, combined with other ingredients, cooked, served or offered for human consumption. The Food Code serves as a model, while specific requirements are established and enforced by state and local jurisdictions. ([U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#))



Make Thorough Washing Part of the Routine

Your mother wasn't wrong: produce needs to be washed.

One Packs® Veggie Prep™ Fruit and Vegetable Wash provides food-service operations with a convenient, premeasured solution formulated to support soaking, agitation, scrubbing and

rinsing. When used as directed, it helps loosen surface soil, residues, debris and other contaminants from fruits and vegetables.

Wash carefully. Agitate thoroughly. Scrub firm produce when appropriate. Remove damaged and outer leaves. Rinse completely with clean running water.

Most importantly, remember that produce washing is a risk-reduction practice—not a guarantee against Cyclospora or other foodborne hazards.



Always use One Packs® Veggie Prep™ Fruit and Vegetable Wash according to its product label and your facility's approved food-safety procedures.

One important compliance note: FDA's consumer guidance generally recommends washing produce under running water rather than using commercial produce washes independent of agitation and running water. This blog therefore positions Veggie Prep specifically for food-service use and avoids claiming that it kills or reliably removes Cyclospora. ([U.S. Food and Drug Administration](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-guidance-washing-produce))