

## Mayo Clinic Minute

### Why do onions make you cry?

| VIDEO  | AUDIO   |
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|  | <i>Sound of an onion being cut</i>  |
|  | Not long after the cutting comes the crying.  |
| <b>Title:</b><br><b>Jen Welper</b><br><b>Executive Chef</b><br><b>Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program</b> | "The irritant can be pretty strong and make us cry pretty quickly."   |
|  | Executive Chef Jen Welper says that irritant is actually part of the onion's built-in protection against predators.                             |
|  | <i>Sound of onion pieces being dropped in a hot pan</i>   |
|  | Chopping breaks up cells inside the onion and sets off a chain reaction that releases volatile chemicals. When those chemicals hit our eyes ... |
| Jen Welper   | "...it activates our tear glands, and, then, we cry."   |
|  | Welper has heard about plenty tricks to thwart the tears: Hold a piece of bread in your mouth, wear goggles ....                                |
| Jen Welper   | "...rinse the onion under cold running water. Another one is to, like, light a match, and blow it out."   |
|  | Welper says it all sounds like more work than it's worth.   |
| Jen Welper   | "Just cut the onion, and get it over with."   |
|  | She says you can reduce the amount of irritant that gets to your eyes by keeping your onion together as much as possible as you cut it.         |
| Jen Welper   | "Hold just the piece that I cut, pull my knife out."  |
|  | And if you end up shedding a few tears?   |
| Jen Welper   | "Sometimes it's really therapeutic to have a good   |

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|  | cry. So just let it out.”                         |
|  | For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Jeff Olsen. |