



Dipon Sarkar

Say 'Cheese!' and there are the microbes

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Who doesn't like cheese? But did you know that there are several tiny living organisms in cheese called micro-organisms, both good and bad ones? The good ones help make the cheese from milk, but the bad microbes can grow in your cheese if it was not made properly or not stored at the correct temperature and they can ultimately make you sick.



I study the growth of the bad microbes in cheese, specifically in a soft cheese called 'Paneer' (traditionally from India). My research focuses on developing tools that can help manufacturers and food regulators judge if the paneer preparation and storage was good enough to prevent the microbes that would make you sick when you eat it.



Growing up in India, I had no particular interest in science until late in high school when I started getting fascinated with how the animal body works. As I grew older, my interest started shifting to the smaller aspects of life; insects, microbes, DNA and genes. I was fascinated to learn how things that are invisible to the naked eye play such a big role in the environment and our lives. Although initially I did not plan to be a scientist, as I started playing around with the good microbes (probiotics) during my time in University, slowly a life in a lab coat tiptoed into my plans.

Will the world be a better place with safer food? Yes! Not only will it reduce the significant health risks from foods, but also reduce food wastage and economic costs associated with food and health loss. And I wish to play a part in it by combining my love for food and microbiology through my research.

For more information about my work: www.utas.edu.au/tia