

PARTICIPANT NAME: _____

**QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE
for Food Safety Research**

I. General Introduction

2 MINUTES

- Welcome
- Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in our research study today. We are conducting this research about at-home meal preparation. We would like to learn what people know about food meal planning, what they actually do and what might be helpful to them as they prepare meals for their families.

We're talking to a number of people across the country to get a variety of opinions so *your* point of view will be very important.

- I don't work for any food companies or advertising agencies or the government. I am an independent market researcher and I get hired by many different companies and organizations like the government, to talk about all kinds of subjects from automobiles to banking to information technology and the U.S Census.
- There is an observatory mirror...
- Since I will be talking with a number of people, we are going to record our discussion. This will allow me to go back later and review what we talked about and eventually I will write a short summary of what I learned.
- Most importantly, there will be no right or wrong answers today. Your opinions are very important to our research. It's my job to make you comfortable enough to be open and honest with your responses. I'm interested in hearing your particular perspective and your personal point of view. This will help us better understand what people commonly do when preparing meals at home.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

II. Respondent Introduction

1 MINUTE

Let's begin by having you introduce yourself, first name only, and tell me a little something about yourself.

- Name
- What you do for a living; family; etc.
- Who does most of the cooking in your household?

III. Existing Habits & Behaviors

12 MINUTES

- Describe a typical day in your home with regard to meal preparation.
 - o How often do you prepare meals?
 - o For whom?
 - o How long does it usually take to prepare meals when you're making them for others?
- Let's talk about the process you go through when preparing a meal.
 - o Describe your physical preparation area (kitchen)?
 - What do you do to prep the area for making a meal?
 - (Listen for or probe) hand-washing; cutting boards, surfaces, hygiene practices
 - o What is your general state of mind when you are preparing a meal? How would you describe your mood?
 - o What do you like about the meal prep process?
 - o What do you dislike about the meal prep process?
 - o Do you usually feel rushed or do you have enough time to prepare meals?
 - o Do you have any concerns when you are preparing food?
 - What do you do to alleviate the concerns?
 - What is (or would be) useful/helpful to you at this point?
- Where do you find out about food, cooking and other kitchen practices?
 - o Friends? TV? Online? Books? Etc.

IV. Knowledge & Awareness

8 MINUTES

- We've been talking about preparing meals. What comes to your mind when I use the term "food safety"?
 - o What does "foodborne illness" mean to you? (Or "food poisoning"?)
- When it comes to food safety, who is responsible for this type of food protection or prevention?
 - o What specifically do they do to address the issue?
- How do you think your children learn hygiene behaviors?
 - o At home? By example? School? Friends? TV?
- If you were to describe the concept of "food safety" to your child, what simple steps you would use to teach them to practice it?
 - o What are the key steps you can take in the kitchen to ensure that food is "safe"?
 - o What does that word "safe" mean to you in this context?
- How important would you say food hygiene is in the kitchen?
(RECORD RATING)
 1. Very important
 2. Important
 3. Somewhat important
 4. Not very important
 5. Not at all important
- What foods cause you the most concern when it comes to food safety?
 - o Why those? Please explain.
 - o Are some foods safer than others?
 - o Are there foods where safety precautions do not apply?
 - (Vegetables; Organic; Etc.)
 - o Are you more concerned about germs or chemicals in foods? Why?
 - o Are different people in your family more vulnerable to food issues? Why?
 - Are these issues preventable? How so?

V. Perceptions & Beliefs

8 MINUTES

- How would you describe your overall feeling about “food safety”?
 - o What are the primary dangers you have concern about?
 - o How did you arrive at this point of view?
- Are you hearing anything about this issue in the news these days?
 - o Where? What?
- Do you think food is getting safer or is more dangerous than in the past?
- Are there things that keep you from, or prevent you from, practicing better food handling or food safety precautions? Please explain.
 - o (Determine emotional as well as rational response.)
 - o (Listen for...) Is it overwhelming?
 - o Do you have enough information about the issue?
 - o What things do you wish you knew more about?
 - o What would be helpful to you in terms of raising your awareness or being more informative or educational?
 - o Where would you go to find out this information?

VI. Four Steps

12 MINUTES

- I'd like to review with you a four-step outline regarding food safety. Within each step there are several suggested practices. I'd like to get your reaction to these suggested practices.
 - A. **Clean:** Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20s *throughout* prep process, before and after handling food; run cutting boards and utensils through dishwasher after each use; keep countertops clean with hot soapy washes
 - o [Listen for if they wash hands and surfaces throughout the prep process.]
 - o Make sense? Good idea? Not? Why?
 - o Do you perform this step?
 - Why? Why not? What prevents you?
 - Is it easy? Difficult? Important? Realistic?
 - o What's missing in this step? What would make it better?

- B. **Separate**: Avoid cross-contamination: Use separate cutting boards; avoid mixing raw foods with other foods in your cart; store raw meats/egg/poultry away from other foods
- o [Listen for if they own/use more than one cutting board and if they switch utensils throughout the prep process.]
 - o Make sense? Good idea? Not? Why?
 - o Do you perform this step?
 - Why? Why not? What prevents you?
 - Is it easy? Difficult? Important? Realistic?
 - o What's missing in this step? What would make it better?
- C. **Cook**: Cook foods to a safe temperature: Use a food thermometer; stir foods when reheating or microwaving; bring all sauces and soups to a boil
- o Make sense? Good idea? Not? Why?
 - o Do you perform this step?
 - Why? Why not? What prevents you?
 - Is it easy? Difficult? Important? Realistic?
 - o Do you own a food thermometer? Do you use it? Why/why not?
 - o What's missing in this step? What would make it better?
- D. **Chill**: Refrigerate promptly: Keep the fridge at 40 deg or below; chill foods within 2 hrs of preparation/purchase in shallow containers; thaw meats/poultry/seafood in the fridge, not the countertop
- o Make sense? Good idea? Not? Why?
 - o Do you perform this step?
 - Why? Why not? What prevents you?
 - Is it easy? Difficult? Important? Realistic?
 - o What's missing in this step? What would make it better?
 - o How do you know what temperature your refrigerator is? How do you know if its cold enough.

- What impact, if any, has hearing about these “food safety practices” had on your behavior (or attitudes)?

VII. Wrap Up

5 MINUTES

- If you or your child or someone in your family got sick from something they ate, how would you know the illness was caused by food? What would you do?
 - o Who would you contact and how?
 - o What steps would you take?
- If you wanted to find out more about food safety, where would you go? Where would you look?
- How, if at all, have your thoughts about food safety changed over the course of our conversation today?
 - o Learn anything?
 - o More/less concern with issue?
 - o What are your emotions? (Empowered? Scared? Relief?)
 - o What changes in your behavior might you make?

Being mindful and sticking with a safe routine is your best defense against food contamination problems.

Thanks for your time today.

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