

**Appendix III  
Healthy Icon Focus Groups  
Moderator's Guide**

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**A. WELCOME AND GROUND RULES (10 min)**

Thank you for taking the time to join us today. I am \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ and we are conducting a research study on behalf of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The purpose of tonight's discussion is to get your thoughts about things you might see on a food label. Your feedback is very important to us. Our discussion will last about 90 minutes.

Before we start, I want to review a few important things.

- Your participation today is voluntary, and you have the right to stop being in the focus group at any time.
- None of my questions are very personal, but you can choose not to answer any of them if you are uncomfortable. Just let me know that you prefer not to answer.
- Anyone can speak out; you don't need to wait for me to call on you, just make sure you speak up and speak one at a time. However, please keep in mind that we have a lot to talk about and materials to review, so it's important that I hear from everyone and that we discuss all the topics.
- Audio/video/observers
  - We are audio and video recording this discussion so that I can give you my full attention and not have to take notes. When writing up our findings, we will not include any information that could identify you. Your name, address, and phone number will not be given to anyone, and no one will contact you about this research after this group is over.

- I have colleagues listening to our discussion and taking notes behind the glass. At the end of our conversation, I may go into the back to see if there are any last-minute questions for you.
- We are also live-streaming our session so that other members of the research team who couldn't be here today can observe our discussion remotely.
- Please set your cell phones to vibrate or turn them completely off. If you need to use the restroom, please feel free to step out and join us once you are done.
- Most importantly, there are no right or wrong answers. None of these are trick questions. I want to know your opinions and about your experiences.
- I am not selling anything, I do not work for the people sponsoring this research, and I haven't created any of the things we'll look at, so please provide your honest opinions.
- Also, I am not an expert about the topics we are going to discuss today or a medical doctor, so you may have questions that I can't answer.
- All of your comments will be kept secure to the extent provided by law, so feel free to say exactly what is on your mind. I will draft a report of the focus group session, and I may include direct quotes in my report, but I never attribute any quote to any particular person. Your name will never appear in any report I develop about this research

Do you have any questions before we continue?

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**B. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS - WARM-UP [5 minutes]**

**[Favorite food and the last time they ate it.]**

**C. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT “HEALTHY” AND “HEALTHY CLAIMS” [10 minutes]**

Today we are going to talk about food labels and some ways that food labels try to communicate that the product is healthy. Have you seen food products that say “healthy” on the label? (If they have not seen “healthy,” ask what they have seen on the front of the package that make them think the product is healthy.)

Can you describe what you've seen?

What do you think it means?

What kinds of foods have you seen that use the label to try and say they are healthy?

How does this kind of information affect you?

**D. REACTIONS TO STIMULI [55 minutes]**

[For the first 3 groups, discussion will begin with no background information on the icon given to participants. From the 4<sup>th</sup> group forward, discussion will begin with reviewing the information piece. Ensure understanding. Then begin icon discussion.]

**[NFL Check Version A on Cereal]**

What are your first impressions of this food package?

What is this food package trying to communicate to you? Is it communicating “Healthy”?

What are the *ways this food package is communicating “healthy”*?

**[Moderator: *Funnel* discussion to focus on the icon.]**

What does the icon make you think about the product?

Do you think this icon is an effective visual reminder to eat healthy?

Does it give you any information about what you should do to eat healthy?

What information does it give you? What information do you think is missing?

**[Probe only if not mentioned]**

How will an icon help with choosing healthy foods?

How will the icon help with purchasing decisions?

**[Show icon on Vegetable Grain Bowl and then Eggs]**

What does the icon make you think when you see it on this product?

**[From this point forward, icons will be on a blank sheet. Repeat questions and probes from above]**

**NFL Check B**

What is the difference between this icon and the one without “FDA”?

**NFL Check C**

**NFL Check D**

**MyPlate-inspired “Healthy” Square**

Now I’d like to show you a different icon.

Have you ever seen this icon? What can you tell me about this icon?

**MyPlate-inspired- “Healthy” Round**

**Postage Stamp A**

**Postage Stamp D**

**[Show all icons together on a page]**

Which theme is most effective for communicating “healthy”?

Describe how you came to that decision.

Which icons do the best to communicate “healthy”?

What about the icon communicates “healthy”?

Is there anything you would change about the icon to make it more effective in communicating “healthy”?

**[Closing - Moderator to check clients for additional questions.] [10 minutes]**

## Moderator’s Guide Appendix

### List of Mock food types

1. Oat Flakes Cereal
2. Frozen Vegetable Grain Bowl
3. Eggs

### Icons themes for testing

1. NFL check
2. Postage Stamp
3. Stylized text-inspired
4. Organic-inspired
5. Circle icons
6. MyPlate-inspired

### Variations within each icon theme

1. Without reference to FDA
2. With “FDA”
3. With ‘Meets FDA criteria for Healthy’
4. Food Groups

Group #	Participant Group	Level of Education	Show Education Piece at start	Label to show at start of Focus Group	Site Number and Location
1 & 9	High Nutrition Motivation	Higher	No	NFL check-A	1. DC/Baltimore Metro
2 & 10	Low Nutrition Motivation	Higher	No	NFL check-A	1. DC/Baltimore Metro
3 & 11	High Nutrition Motivation	Lower	No	NFL check-A	1. DC/Baltimore Metro
4 & 12	Low Nutrition Motivation	Lower	Yes	NFL check-A	1. DC/Baltimore Metro
5 & 13	High Nutrition Motivation	Higher	Yes	MyPlate-inspired A	2. Midwest
6 & 14	Low Nutrition Motivation	Lower	Yes	MyPlate-inspired A	2. Midwest
7 & 15	High Nutrition Motivation	Lower	Yes	MyPlate-inspired A	3. Southwest US
8 & 16	Low Nutrition Motivation	Higher	Yes	MyPlate-inspired A	3. Southwest US