

Raleigh, NC - Young Parents

Food Thermometer Campaign Consumer Focus Groups

Group: Young Parent Home Food Preparers
Location: Raleigh, NC
Moderator: Sheri Cates
Date: July 19, 1999

I. Group Description

Ten persons, aged 21 to 35, participated in the young parents focus group. Nine participants were parents of children aged six or younger. Two participants were pregnant, and one did not have other children at home. All participants had more than 12 years of education. All were primary food preparers in their home or shared responsibility for preparing meals. Two participants were of Hispanic origin while the remaining eight were Caucasian. Specific demographic information is shown below.

Age		Gender		Education		Hispanic	
21-30	6	Female	6	≤12 years	0	Yes	2
31-35	4	Male	4	>12 years	10	No	8

II. Food Safety Perceptions

When asked what comes to mind when they think of food safety, some participants mentioned "cleansing" and "cleanliness." One person mentioned not having juices and blood from meats on the counters and silverware. Others discussed washing hands, rinsing fruits and vegetables, and using fresh meats.

Most participants seemed to be somewhat concerned about food safety. At least six participants said they were more concerned about the safety of foods in restaurants than in their own homes. However, one person was very concerned about food safety at home and worries about how old meats are and if they smell fresh. Another person was very concerned because of news stories about people getting sick and dying from foodborne illness. One participant said she is not concerned about food safety anywhere.

Participants said they get food safety information from a variety of places, in particular television and the news. Others got information from their mothers, work experience, and package labeling.

Participants mentioned bacteria, parasites, and food being left out as causes of foodborne illness. Foods they consider more likely to cause foodborne illness include chicken, seafood, and eggs.

When asked what populations other than children are at high risk for foodborne illness, participants mentioned senior citizens. However, in spite of knowing that children are at higher risk, most participants said they were not more cautious and have not changed behaviors since having children. One person switched from a wooden to a plastic cutting board and is more careful about wiping counters and washing things immediately to protect her child.

III. Food Safety Knowledge

Most participants were familiar with the safe food handling label on raw meat and poultry products. When asked what information they recall from the label, participants mentioned keeping meat away from other foods, wiping counters and cutting boards, washing hands, keeping food refrigerated, and expiration and sell-by dates. One person said she was more aware of the information on food labels because her mother has been encouraging her to pay more attention to food safety.

Participants thought "cook thoroughly" meant to cook to a certain temperature or cook until the juices run clear. One person said to just burn the food. One person said "cook to proper temperatures" meant he would use his cookbook for a food he did not prepare often and did not know to what temperature to cook it.

All participants said they look at expiration dates on meat and poultry products. A few participants said they consider the words "sell-by" to be the last date they should use a product. One person said he would not use a product past the sell-by date because he had suffered foodborne illness before and did not want to take any chances.

All participants said they use paper towels for clean up. Several said they use bleach or cleaner with the paper towel. All participants said they do not reuse paper towels.

IV. Thermometer Use

Participants were asked how they protect their families from foodborne illness. Participants mentioned the following: keeping work surfaces clean, smelling and rinsing meats before using, using a new (clean) dish to take food off the grill, washing cutting boards before reusing them, and washing hands with soap and hot water. No one mentioned using a food thermometer.

Although three people own food thermometers, only two use a thermometer when cooking large cuts of meat (i.e., roasts and turkeys). One person said he used a thermometer with large cuts of meat to preserve the look of the meat by not cutting into it. No one used a thermometer for cooking small pieces of meat such as hamburgers.

Participants were asked how they know meat is done without using a thermometer. Participants mentioned the following: when the meat is no longer red, by the color of the meat, by cutting into the meat, and when the juices run clear.

V. Concept Testing For Character

The character exhibits and rating forms used by participants are included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook.

EXHIBIT 1: Plain Thermometers

The majority of the group preferred the round thermometer (the thermometer on the left) to the bell-shaped thermometer. Participants agreed that the numbers were easier to read on the round thermometer. One person liked the F indicating Fahrenheit. Others thought the round thermometer looked more realistic and more professional. When asked whether it would be as effective with a blank dial or with zeros, one person said that she would not know what it was and another person said he would know if there were zeros. A few participants suggested that the thermometer be shown with hands holding it or inserted in meat. Most seemed to agree that the thermometer would be effective in a campaign to promote thermometer usage, but one person felt it needed more "pizzazz."

EXHIBIT 2: Dressed Thermometers

The group again preferred the round thermometer character (shown on the right) to the bell-shaped thermometer. Participants liked the metal-like look of the stem, the character's pointing to the temperature, and the character's smile, hat, sweat beads, and handkerchief. Suggested improvements include straightening the 160° in the mouth, making the dots on the handkerchief yellow, and making the lines of the hat more defined. Two participants thought the hat was actually steam rising off the thermometer. One person suggested making the shadow of the stem red because the blue seems too "cool." When asked if the thermometer should hold something in its hand instead of the handkerchief, one person suggested a fork or a hamburger. Another reiterated the suggestion that the thermometer be held by a hand and/or inserted in meat.

One participant thought the bell-shaped character looked like a teapot. Some said the scarf on the bell-shaped character reminded them of a pastry chef or a cowboy. One person said there should not be too much detail on the thermometer.

When asked what type of cooking came to mind upon seeing the characters, a few participants said indoor cooking while the rest mentioned outdoor cooking. One person said they thought of outdoor cooking because of television commercials showing men grilling out wearing a chef hat. When asked what gender they thought the character was, all group members viewed it as male. Some thought the bell-shaped character could be female.

When asked about names for the character, participants suggested Tempie, Mr. Sweat, Sparky, and Happy Thermometer. When asked if they liked the names Thermie and Therman some responded favorably. Someone suggested Chef Therman while others thought Thermie was too cute and hard to say. One person suggested making the character's hat bigger so its name could be written on it.

Some participants felt this character would be effective in promoting a food thermometer campaign if it appeared in places other than just the grocery store. Other suggestions included checkout lines at stores, doctor's offices, magazine and television ads, and the State Fair. Some agreed that sending information home from school with their children might be effective. One person suggested putting the character directly on meat packages rather than just posting it at the meat counter, and others suggested displaying the character on the safe food handling label. They said they did not pay attention to this label because it does not stand out and they are so used to seeing it that they do not read it. One said she might read the label if something new—like the character's picture—was added to it.

One person felt a happy character would not be effective in the grocery store. She said that if she were trying to leave the store with her two (crying) children, she would not stop to pick up a brochure with a smiling character. She would, however, pay attention to a warning message.

Participants thought the character would appeal to young to middle-aged adults. They did not feel it would be effective with seniors because as one person said, her grandmother had cooked without a thermometer for years and had not died. Others said children would be attracted to the character because it looks happy.

Participant Rating Of Characters

Participants voted overwhelmingly for Characters C and E, the two round thermometers with hats. The results of the rating are shown below.

Characters	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A	1			1
B		1	2	3
C	9			9
D		1		1
E		8	1	9
F			1	1

EXHIBIT 3: Thermometers in Hamburgers

The group liked seeing the thermometer in meat. They preferred the thermometer inserted in the top rather than the side of the burger, saying it was easier to read. Some participants felt the side-inserted thermometer was awkward. They also felt the temperature should represent the type of meat in which the thermometer was inserted. Participants said they would have to see the thermometer in a hamburger to know they were supposed to use a thermometer when cooking hamburgers.

EXHIBIT 4: Thermometers in Roast/Chicken

A few participants suggested making the numbers stand out more because they did not notice that the temperature readings differed depending on the type of meat. One person suggested making the numbers red. Another participant thought the thermometer should be shown more often in chicken than other meats because he was more concerned about *Salmonella* poisoning and the safety of chicken.

EXHIBIT 5: Thermometer in Leftover Stew

Participants did not identify the food shown in this exhibit as leftovers. Two participants suggested showing the food in a plastic storage dish or in front of a microwave because this is how people generally cook leftovers.

VI. Concept Testing For Slogans

Before completing the slogan rating form, the group brainstormed for possible slogans to go with the thermometer character. Suggested slogans were written on a flipchart for better viewing:

- How hot is your meat?
- Let me tell you when it's ready
- Is your meat done?
- Let me take the guesswork out
- Your burger's not done 'til you see 160
- Take your food's temperature or someone may take yours
- If you want juicy meat, use me!
- Cooking it right for your delight

- Cook safe, eat well, live healthier
- It's not the color, it's the temperature
- You can't judge a meat by its color
- It's what's on the inside that counts
- Don't guess temperature and taste...let me check
- _____ says: Safety not Color

A few of these slogans were mentioned after the rating took place and therefore were not included in the slogans to be rated.

Participant Rating Of Slogans

The rating form used by participants is included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook. Participants were encouraged to “write in” slogans suggested by the group. Although there was no group consensus about which slogan was preferred, a few slogans received multiple votes. The results of the ratings are shown below.

Slogan	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A) COOK TO THE "T"emperature		1		1
B) COOK TO THE T's for Temperature and Taste				0
C) Cook to a "T" for Temperature and Taste	2	1		3
D) Cook it to a "T" for Temperature and Taste	1		2	3
E) Cook It Safely Temperature Rules!		1		1
F) Thermie says: Temperature Rules!	1		1	2
G) Use a Thermometer...it's a Safe Measure	1	3		4
H) Is it Safe Yet?	1			1
I) Show Me the Temperature		2		2
J) Thermie says: "COOKITSAFE!"		1	2	3
K) Use Thermie!				0

Several participants preferred Slogans C (Cook to a “T” for Temperature and Taste) and D (Cook it to a “T” for Temperature and Taste). When asked why, one person answered that they liked D because the “it” in “Cook it to a T” referred to the meat, which is what is being cooked.

Several participants liked “Use a Thermometer...it’s a Safe Measure” (G); however, one person said he did not like G because it did not emphasize taste.

One person said that what he looked for in a slogan was why he should use a thermometer. He said he would never have considered using a thermometer until he learned that color is not an indicator of doneness. He suggested a slogan conveying the message that temperature, not color, matters.

Most participants wrote in a slogan that was suggested by the group. Most of the write-in votes were for different slogans. However, three people wrote in “Cooking it Right for Your Delight.”

VII. Fight BAC! Awareness

None of the participants were familiar with the Fight BAC! character, though they guessed it represented germs and bacteria. One person thought it would appeal to school children.

Raleigh, NC - General Population

Food Thermometer Campaign Consumer Focus Groups

Group: General Population Home Food Preparers
Location: Raleigh, NC
Moderator: Sheri Cates
Date: July 19, 1999

I. Group Description

Ten persons, aged 21 to 60, participated in the general population focus group. All were primary food preparers in their home or shared responsibility for preparing meals. All participants had more than 12 years of education. Three participants were of Hispanic origin, two were African American, and the remaining five were Caucasian. Some participants had children at home. One participant's wife was pregnant and had other children at home. One respondent prepared meals for an elderly woman in her home. Specific demographic information is shown below.

Age		Gender		Education		Hispanic	
21-40	4	Female	6	≤12 years	0	Yes	3
41-60	6	Male	4	>12 years	10	No	7

II. Food Safety Perceptions

Participants were asked what comes to mind when they think of food safety. Participants mentioned hamburger because of *E. coli*, botulism from canned foods, and checking dates on dairy and meat products. Some participants were very concerned about foodborne illness, especially because of recent media coverage of foodborne illness. One person said he was more concerned with how food is handled before he buys it, citing concerns about the overall freshness of food and how it gets to the grocery store. Two participants were concerned about fruits and vegetables being unclean or infested with insects.

Some participants felt they were fairly knowledgeable about food safety. One person said he could rely on his eyes and nose more than anything else. When asked where they get information on food safety, participants mentioned food labels, the media, their mothers, *Health Alert* on the Internet, and magazines.

Potential causes of foodborne illness cited by participants include not keeping food cold enough, food getting hot and then being cooled down again, leaving food out for extended periods of time, not cooking foods properly, not washing foods, and the age of foods. Foods the participants considered more likely to cause foodborne illness include meats, dairy products, seafood, and mayonnaise.

Participants believed that infants, children, persons with weakened immune systems, pregnant women, and senior citizens were at greater risk for foodborne illness. One person said the mentally challenged were also at greater risk because they may not have the mental capacity to know how to properly handle and cook foods.

III. Food Safety Knowledge

Most participants were familiar with the safe food handling label on raw meat and poultry products. Most recalled that the label provides information on how to handle the product, to what temperature to cook the product, and to wash hands and cutting surfaces after handling meat. One person thought that chicken should be rinsed before being cooked, although the safe handling label does not say this. Another participant said she read on the Internet that it is not necessary to do so because cooking is sufficient to kill bacteria.

Participants described "cook thoroughly" as cooking until the meat is well done but not burnt and until the juices of the meat run clear. They thought "cook to proper temperatures" meant the internal temperature and cooking to a temperature that kills bacteria.

Most participants looked at expiration dates when purchasing meat and poultry products. Some used the product by the sell-by date even though they knew that meant the last day the store could sell the product. One person tries to use the product within a day or two of the sell-by date. Another participant said he looks for the product with the latest sell-by date in order to buy the freshest product.

Most participants used paper towels to clean up. Several stated that they use soap or spray cleaner with paper towels. One person recently switched from cloth towels to paper towels and cleaner. Another uses just a paper towel without soap while one person uses a sponge and soap. Most said they do not reuse paper towels.

IV. Thermometer Use

Participants identified a variety of measures for protecting their families from foodborne illness. Some participants check dates and are careful about how long they leave food out. Others refrigerate leftovers immediately and throw out leftovers not eaten within two days. Participants are careful to handle and cook vegetables and meats separately, and one person stores all meats separately. Participants smell foods to ensure freshness, cook meats until they are well done, keep counters clean, and use acrylic cutting boards. One person cuts meat on a plate (rather than on a cutting board) and washes the plate immediately after contact with the meat.

Five participants own food thermometers, but only three use a thermometer when cooking large cuts of meat (i.e., roasts and turkeys). In addition to using food thermometers with large cuts of meat, one person uses her thermometer to ensure that meat has thawed to the center after being defrosted in the refrigerator. No one used a thermometer for cooking small pieces of meat such as hamburgers. When asked how they know meat is done without using a thermometer, participants said they look at the juices or they feel the meat. Another participant who prepares soups and stews often thinks that because it cooks so long it must be well done.

One woman does not use a thermometer because her mother never did. Another thinks she should use a thermometer because she often overcooks meat but assumed that if she cooks it long enough it will get to a safe temperature.

V. Concept Testing For Character

The character exhibits and the rating form completed by participants are included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook.

EXHIBIT 1: Plain Thermometers

The group preferred the round thermometer (shown on the left) to the bell-shaped thermometer because its digital display was easier to read. Several participants were confused by the red dot and said the dot should be green, should go off when a certain temperature was reached, or should be explained on the thermometer's package. Participants did not think the character would be as effective without the numbers or with zeros on the display.

EXHIBIT 2: Dressed Thermometers

After some discussion, the group agreed they preferred the round thermometer (shown on the right) to the bell-shaped thermometer. Some participants thought the numbers were easier to read, and that the thermometer looked happier and more realistic. Two people expressed concern that the character would detract from the seriousness of food safety, but most agreed that with a slogan emphasizing safety, the dressed character would be effective.

The participants liked the hat and sweat beads but some thought the character's face should be redder to indicate it was hot. One person liked the thermometer's finger pointing to the temperature. Several did not like the scarf while one person did not like the characters at all. She preferred the plain thermometers.

When asked what type of cooking came to mind when looking at the characters, participants mentioned Thanksgiving, Italian, baking, and grilling. All participants thought the character was male, although one person suggested making the hat pink to indicate it is female. Participants thought the character would be effective with children, and all agreed it would be effective with men and women even if the character was male.

Participants offered the names Tommy Thermometer, Mr. Safety Probe, Peter Probe, Temp Set, Sammy Safe Meat, Temperman, and Terry Thermometer. Most liked Thermie but did not like Tempy. One person stated he would prefer a name that was tied to the thermometer's use.

Participant Rating Of Characters

Participants preferred Characters E, C, and A. The results of the rating are shown below.

Characters	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A	1	3	2	6
B			4	4
C	3	4	2	9
D			1	1
E	6	3	1	10
F				0

When asked why they liked E, one person said it looked more like a thermometer and she liked the smile. One person who preferred A did so because she felt if the character was going to be a cartoon it should look more like a cartoon.

EXHIBIT 3: Thermometers In Hamburgers

Participants preferred the thermometer inserted in the top of the hamburger saying it looked more realistic. Another participant thought it would be easy to burn oneself if inserting the thermometer into the side of the hamburger because the thermometer would be so close to the heat source.

EXHIBIT 4: Thermometers In Roast/Chicken

One participant thought the thermometer was not inserted far enough into the turkey because it appeared just behind the leg and not in the thickness of the meat. Another participant thought it might be more effective to use the graphic with the ham because most people use pop-up thermometers in turkeys.

EXHIBIT 5: Thermometer In Leftover Stew

Participants did not identify the food shown in Exhibit 5 as leftovers. They said the leftovers should appear in a plastic storage dish or with a microwave because that is how most people reheat leftovers.

VI. Concept Testing For Slogans

Before completing the slogan rating form, the group brainstormed for possible slogans to go with the thermometer character. Suggested slogans were written on a flipchart for better viewing:

- Cook right – keep your thermometer in sight
- Cook it to here to avoid any fear
- When it gets hot, the food is right
- When it's done, it's time for fun
- Cook the meat to the right temperature before you eat
- Don't eat late if you know it's safe
- _____ says... I can't wait 'til we eat this well-prepared meat
- Is it really HOT, HOT, HOT?
- When the temperature is right, it's okay to bite!

Participant Rating Of Slogans

The rating form used by participants is included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook. Participants were encouraged to "write in" slogans suggested by the group. Although there was no group consensus about which slogan was preferred, a few slogans received multiple votes. The results of the rating are shown below.

Slogan	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A) COOK TO THE "T"emperature	1			1
B) COOK TO THE T's for Temperature and Taste				0

Slogan	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
C) Cook to a "T" for Temperature and Taste			1	1
D) Cook it to a "T" for Temperature and Taste		2		2
E) Cook It Safely Temperature Rules!	1	1		2
F) Thermie says: Temperature Rules!			1	1
G) Use a Thermometer...it's a Safe Measure	3			3
H) Is it Safe Yet?	2	2	2	6
I) Show Me the Temperature		2	2	4
J) Thermie says: "COOKITSAFE!"	1	1		2
K) Use Thermie!	1			1

Participants who chose "Use a Thermometer...it's a Safe Measure" (G) did so because the statement was to the point and emphasized the words "thermometer" and "safe." Participants who chose "Is it Safe Yet?" (H) did so because it seemed catchy and it made them think of safety and using a thermometer. One person liked the phrase "Cook to the T's" because it made him want to know what the 'T' was and how it related to the slogan.

Some participants did not think it was necessary to include the character's name in the slogan and suggested writing the name on its hat or shirt. One person, however, thought it was important for the character to have a name to help people remember it.

One participant suggested it would be most effective to emphasize the issue of the color of the meat in the slogan. Others agreed it was important to mention this in the campaign but did not think it had to be part of the slogan. Another participant was concerned that the campaign would have to "unthink" the mentality of today's cook whose mother had cooked the same way for years without killing anyone. He thought the campaign should emphasize the color issue because the new research findings on color may change this way of thinking.

Another participant said the slogan should emphasize the ease of using a thermometer because there is no guesswork involved. He uses a thermometer because it is easy to know when the meat is done, not because of food safety concerns.

Most participants wrote in a slogan that was mentioned by the group. Most of the write-in votes were for different slogans. However, two people liked "Cook it to Here to Avoid any Fear."

VII. Fight BAC! Awareness

None of the participants were familiar with the Fight BAC! character. However, they thought it would be effective in a food safety promotion campaign when paired with the thermometer character in a good guy/bad guy situation.

New Orleans - Seniors

Food Thermometer Campaign Consumer Focus Groups

Group: Senior Home Food Preparers
Location: New Orleans, LA
Moderator: Sheri Cates
Date: August 4, 1999

I. Group Description

Eleven persons, aged 60 to 78*, participated in the senior focus group. All were primary food preparers in their home or shared responsibility for preparing meals. Five participants were high school graduates, three had some college education, two were college graduates, and one had post graduate education. One participant was of Hispanic origin, three were African American, and the remaining seven were Caucasian. Most households consisted of only two persons (the participant and his/her spouse) though several mentioned cooking often for visiting family members. One participant lived on a sailboat and did most of their cooking outdoors. Specific demographic information is shown below.

Age		Gender		Education		Hispanic	
60-69	8*	Female	9	≤12 years	5	Yes	1
70+	3	Male	2	>12 years	6	No	10

* Upon rescreening, all participants indicated they were 60 years old or older. However, one person indicated their age as 41 to 50 on the Pre-discussion survey.

II. Food Safety Perceptions

Participants were asked what comes to mind when they think of food safety. They mentioned ensuring foods are fresh and look good, ensuring foods are cooked right but not overcooked, checking expiration dates, and washing foods before eating them. Nearly all participants indicated that they were very concerned about foodborne illness, and some thought their knowledge of food safety was about average. Participants thought the cause of foodborne illness was bacteria.

When asked what groups they thought were at higher risk for foodborne illness, most participants mentioned children and the elderly. They felt that poultry and pork were the foods most likely to cause foodborne illness.

III. Food Safety Knowledge

About half of the participants were familiar with the safe food handling label on raw meat and poultry products. They recalled that the label provides information on handling the product, storing it in the refrigerator, and washing hands. Participants described “cook thoroughly” as cooking meat throughout until it is not pink on the inside.

Most participants look at expiration dates when purchasing meat and poultry products. Some indicated they look for products with the latest sell-by date in order to buy the freshest product. They knew that the sell-by date is the date by which the store must sell the product, and the use-by date is the date by which the product should be used or thrown out if not used by that date.

Most participants use paper towels to clean up. Several stated that they use soap or spray cleaner with paper towels. One person uses a sponge with bleach and uses a new sponge every week. Non one said they reuse paper towels.

IV. Thermometer Use

Participants identified a variety of measures for protecting their families from foodborne illness. Most are sure to keep hands, cooking surfaces, silverware, and cutting boards clean. One person washes everything including meats. Another participant does not use a plastic cutting board because she believes germs cannot be cleaned from plastic.

Seven participants own food thermometers, and most use a thermometer when cooking large cuts of meat (i.e., roasts and turkeys). A few use a thermometer for cooking small pieces of meat such as hamburgers. When asked why they do not use a thermometer, one person said she just knows from experience how to cook meats. One person uses a thermometer because her mother always did.

One participant mentioned that she watches a local cooking show every week where the chef never uses a thermometer. However, the same chef does use a thermometer in his cookbooks. She mentioned other cooking shows she watches where she had not seen a thermometer being used.

V. Concept Testing For Character

The character exhibits and the rating form completed by participants are included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook.

EXHIBIT 1: Plain Thermometers

The group preferred the round thermometer (shown on the left) to the bell-shaped thermometer. One person was concerned that the gray color of the bell-shaped thermometer would be hard for seniors with poor eyesight to read. Others thought the numbers on the round thermometer should be bigger and bolder. One participant suggested making the numbers red and larger and removing the yellow color of the face. Another suggestion was to make the display black on white instead of blue because black on white is easier to see.

Participants did not think the character would be as effective without the numbers or with zeros on the display. Without such markings, they weren't sure they would recognize it is a thermometer or what kind of thermometer it is.

EXHIBIT 2: Dressed Thermometers

The group overwhelmingly preferred the round thermometer (shown on the right) to the bell-shaped thermometer. One participant did not like either thermometer and preferred that the cartoon elements be removed and bands of color added around the outside of the thermometer's head. Other participants did not like the bright red handkerchief of the bell-shaped thermometer saying it detracted from the temperature reading.

Participants thought the hands pointing to the temperature were just right, and they liked the hat and sweat beads. However, one person thought the sweat beads might discourage some new cooks because they may associate the sweat with hard work and decide not to cook. Others disagreed though, saying the thermometer is the one doing the work so the sweat was appropriate. When asked what the thermometer should hold in his hand if he were not holding a handkerchief, one person mentioned an oven mitt. The group did not show interest in the scarf on the bell-shaped thermometer.

When asked what type of cooking came to mind when looking at the characters, participants mentioned turkey and roast because that is what they cook using a thermometer. All participants thought the character was male, although one person thought it should be female because most women do the cooking. She drew a thermometer wearing an apron with eyelashes, hair, lips, and earrings.

One participant thought the character might be effective with children but not with adults which she thought was the target audience. However, another thought the chef hat indicated it was an adult thermometer.

Participants offered the names Hot Shot, Hotsy Totsy, Thermie Good, and Thermie Easy. Some liked Thermie and Chef Therman but did not like Temple.

Participant Rating Of Characters

Participants preferred Characters C and E, the round thermometer characters. There were several votes for Character B as well. The results of the rating are shown below.

Characters	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A		1	3	4
B	2	1	4	7
C	1	7	2	10
D				0
E	8	1	1	10
F				0

When asked why they liked E better, some said they liked the smile.

EXHIBIT 3: Thermometers In Hamburgers

Participants preferred the thermometer inserted in the top of the hamburger but thought the burger should look more realistic. Some suggested showing a grill underneath the burger.

EXHIBIT 4: Thermometers In Roast/Chicken

One participant thought the turkey should be brown in color because it looked raw. Some said the thermometer's face could be a little redder or could have rosy cheeks.

EXHIBIT 5: Thermometer In Leftover Stew

Participants did not identify the food shown in Exhibit 5 as leftovers. They did not think this graphic was as effective.

Several participants thought the thermometers shown in meat should be drawn straight up and down like the stand-alone thermometers. They did not like the angle of the head in these graphics.

VI. Concept Testing For Slogans

Before completing the slogan rating form, the group brainstormed for possible slogans to go with the thermometer character. Suggested slogans were written on a flipchart for better viewing:

- I got the hots for you
- Therms kill Germs
- Thermie gets it done
- Thermie does it Right
- Be Safe, Be Sure, Cook to the Right Temperature
- Cook it Safely, Use a Thermometer
- Use the Therm to kill the Germ
- I've got you covered

- Safety First – Use a Thermometer
- Cook it Safely
- Safe Cooks use a Thermometer
- Smart Cooks use a Thermometer
- Cook Healthy with Thermie
- Cook with Confidence
- Be Safe, Be Sure, Be Satisfied
- Cook Smart, Cook with Thermie
- Thermie gets it Done
- Healthy, Tasty, and Safe: Use a Thermometer
- The Taste is Right with the First Bite

Participant Rating Of Slogans

The rating form used by participants is included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook. Participants were encouraged to “write in” slogans suggested by the group. The results of the rating are shown below.

Slogan	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A) Cook to a "T" for Temperature and Taste	2			2
B) Cook it to a "T" for Temperature and Taste		2	1	3
C) Cook It Safely Temperature Rules!	1	1	2	4
D) Use a Thermometer...it's a Safe Measure		2	1	3
E) Is it Safe Yet?	1	1		2
F) Show Me the Temperature	2	1		3
G) Thermie says: "COOKITSAFE!"			1	1
H) When the Temperature is Right, It's Safe to Bite	3	1	4	8
I) Safety to the Max...Know Your Temperature Facts		1	1	2

Several participants preferred "When the Temperature is Right, It's Safe to Bite" (H). Some thought the slogan should be turned around to read, "It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature is Right." However, two participants disagreed saying the temperature must be right first before you can bite.

When asked what message the slogan should emphasize, participants said ease of use, safety, and taste. However, most participants were more interested in the slogan emphasizing safety.

Several participants wrote in a slogan that was mentioned by the group. Most of the write-in votes were for different slogans. However, two people liked, "Therms kill Germs," two liked "Be Safe, Be Sure, Cook to the Right Temperature," and two liked, "Smart Cooks use a Thermometer."

VII. Fight BAC! Awareness

Only one of the participants was familiar with the Fight BAC! character. He had seen the brochure in a local hospital where he volunteers although he had never read the brochure. One person suggested giving him the name Mr. Bac and a wife named Teria.

New Orleans - Young Parents

Food Thermometer Campaign Consumer Focus Groups

Group: Young Parent Home Food Preparers
Location: New Orleans, LA
Moderator: Sheri Cates
Date: August 4, 1999

I. Group Description

Seven persons, aged 21 to 35, participated in the young parents focus group. Six participants were parents of children aged six or younger. One participant was pregnant and did not have other children at home. Five participants were high school graduates, one had some college education, and one was a college graduate. All were primary food preparers in their home or shared responsibility for preparing meals. Two participants were of Hispanic origin, two were African American, and the remaining three were Caucasian. Specific demographic information is shown below.

Age		Gender		Education		Hispanic	
21-30	3	Female	4	≤12 years	5	Yes	2
31-35	4	Male	3	>12 years	2	No	5

II. Food Safety Perceptions

When asked what comes to mind when they think of food safety, several participants mentioned chicken, and some cited recent salmonella scares. One man who worked in a hotel was concerned about *E. coli* in hamburgers. Others mentioned washing counters and cooking foods for long periods of time.

Participants said they get food safety information from a variety of places, including television and the news. Two persons mentioned the Home Network and 20/20. Others got information from their mother, work experience, and a home mailing. Participants thought temperature and shipping and handling played a role in causing foodborne illness. Some participants thought hot dogs were a food more likely to cause foodborne illness. Other foods mentioned were packaged meats and seafood.

The group was asked if they were more cautious about food preparation since having children. Some agreed they were, but a few stated they had always been cautious. The expecting mother was more cautious now that she is pregnant because she did not want to get sick.

III. Food Safety Knowledge

The majority of participants were familiar with the safe food handling label on raw meat and poultry products. When asked what information they recall from the label, participants mentioned only expiration dates. One person said she did not look at the label because she already knew what to do with the meat.

Participants said they look at expiration dates on meat and poultry products. A few participants said they consider the words "sell-by" to be the last date a store could sell a product. One person said "use-by" meant the last day one should use a product if it had been kept unfrozen.

When asked what they thought "cook thoroughly" means, one participant suggested meat, especially red meat, being cooked well done. When asked about "cook to proper temperatures" meant, the group talked about the temperature called for in the recipe for cooking that kind of meat or poultry. They agreed that different meats should be cooked to different temperatures.

All participants said they use paper towels for clean up. Most use soap or cleaner with the paper towel. No one said they reuse paper towels.

IV. Thermometer Use

Participants were asked how they protect their families from foodborne illness. Participants mentioned the following: not letting their children touch raw meat, washing hands, keeping all surfaces clean, and using different utensils. Participants said they know food is done by slicing it to look at the inside, knowing from experience how long to cook something, and ensuring that the meat is not pink and juices run clear. One person said they might use a thermometer if they are microwaving a turkey.

Although two people own food thermometers, they only use one when cooking large cuts of meat (i.e., roasts and turkeys). One person said she does not trust thermometers and mentioned a time a chef cooked a chicken to what he said was the proper temperature but the meat was still pink. No one used a thermometer for cooking small pieces of meat such as hamburgers.

V. Concept Testing For Character

The character exhibits and rating forms used by participants are included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook.

EXHIBIT 1: Plain Thermometers

The group preferred the round thermometer (the thermometer on the left) to the bell-shaped thermometer. Two participants thought the graphics only looked like thermometers because of the numbers on the face. Another participant thought the round thermometer looked like it would give more and better information. Participants agreed that the numbers on the round thermometer were easier to read. Several participants commented that the decimal point was not necessary as there was no number following the decimal.

EXHIBIT 2: Dressed Thermometers

The group again preferred the round thermometer character (shown on the right) to the bell-shaped thermometer. Participants thought the character's hand pointing to the temperature was in the right position. They thought it looked friendly and happy, and they liked the sweat beads and Fahrenheit symbol. Suggested improvements include straightening the 160° in the mouth and making the dots on the handkerchief yellow.

When asked if the thermometer should hold something in its hand instead of the handkerchief, one person suggested a spatula or other utensil. Some thought that might be better than the handkerchief because it is more cooking related. They also liked the idea that it give a thumbs-up

sign indicating the food is ready. They did not like the idea of it holding or being inserted in a piece of meat as that would suggest it was only for use with that particular kind of meat. Some thought the red button that was on the plain round thermometer should also be included on the dressed thermometer. They thought it was a good indication that the thermometer was working properly.

Participants did not find the bell-shaped character appealing. Some participants thought it looked like a mailbox or a piece of candy. Some said the scarf on the bell-shaped character looked like a beard.

When asked what type of cooking came to mind upon seeing the characters, a few participants said grilling and barbecue, and one said cooking turkey. Most group members viewed the character as male, but the women did not find that offensive.

Participants offered the names Tempy, Theo, Thermo, and Thermo Stan. One did not like Therman saying it sounded too masculine, but they seemed to like the name Thermie.

Some participants said this character would be effective in promoting a food thermometer campaign. One woman thought her children would remember it and would remind her to use a thermometer.

Participant Rating Of Characters

Participants preferred Characters C and E, the round thermometer characters. There were several third place votes for Character A. The results of the rating are shown below.

Characters	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A			5	5
B			1	1
C	4	3		7
D			1	1
E	3	4		7
F				0

Participants said they liked C because the numbers were easier to read. Some said they would prefer E if the numbers were straightened to make them more legible because they like the smile on E.

EXHIBIT 3: Thermometers in Hamburgers

Some participants did not like seeing the thermometer in meat because they felt that meant the thermometer was only to be used when cooking hamburgers. They did understand that the 160°F was showing to what temperature to cook the hamburger. Some did not like the rosy cheeks of the character saying it looked too hot.

EXHIBIT 4: Thermometers in Roast/Chicken

One woman thought the turkey looked raw because of the pinkish color. She preferred the thermometer be shown with several meats pictured around it. Another participant thought it would be effective to show the thermometer in a turkey above the turkey counter at the grocery store but not to show it in a turkey on an advertisement. Another suggestion was to show the character next to a plate of a fully prepared meal and have it give the thumbs-up sign.

EXHIBIT 5: Thermometer in Leftover Stew

Participants did not identify the food shown in this exhibit as leftovers. Some participants said they did not think the temperature of leftovers needed to be measured because they have already been cooked. One participant mentioned that leftovers are generally warmed in a microwave.

VI. Concept Testing For Slogans

Before completing the slogan rating form, the group brainstormed for possible slogans to go with the thermometer character. Suggested slogans were written on a flipchart for better viewing:

- Use the Therm to Kill the Germ
- If Tommy doesn't check your food, the doctor may check your tummy
- Use Tempy, Don't be Wimpy
- Tempy says, "Cook to Your Health"
- Tempy says, "Be Healthy and Safe"

- Tempy Teaches You to Cook Right

A few of these slogans were mentioned after the rating took place and therefore were not included in the slogans to be rated.

Participant Rating Of Slogans

The rating form used by participants is included in the Focus Group Materials section of this notebook. Participants were encouraged to “write in” slogans suggested by the group. Although there was no group consensus about which slogan was preferred, a few slogans received multiple votes. The results of the ratings are shown below.

Slogan	Total Votes			
	First	Second	Third	Total
A) Cook to a “T” for Temperature and Taste				0
B) Cook it to a “T” for Temperature and Taste				0
C) Cook It Safely Temperature Rules!				0
D) Use a Thermometer...it’s a Safe Measure		1	1	2
E) Is it Safe Yet?				0
F) Show Me the Temperature				0
G) Thermie says: “COOKITSAFE!”		4		4
H) When the Temperature is Right, It’s Safe to Bite	4		2	6
I) Safety to the Max...Know Your Temperature Facts	1		2	3

Participants favorite solgan was “When the Temperature is Right, It’s Safe to Bite” (H). Some suggested using “Tempy says...” before the slogan. Another person liked H because it emphasized watching the temperature, which is what one needs a thermometer for. Others liked it because it rhymes, it’s catchy, and it has the right message — safety. Several participants liked “Thermie says, COOKITSAFE!” (G) because it uses the character’s name, and one person liked the connected word. Some participants liked “Use a Thermometer...it’s a Safe Measure” (D) and “Safety to the Max...Know Your Temperature Facts” (I) because they stress the safety message. One participant strongly felt that the words “safety” and “temperature” should be mentioned in the slogan. Another thought that people would really pay attention if the message presents facts because people want to know the truth.

Participants liked using the character’s name with the slogan. One participants thought using a name with a slogan would work with her children because they would remember the name and remind her what the character says. She referred to children as “walking commercials” because they remember and repeat everything they hear.

When asked what kind of message would be most effective in a campaign, participants suggested safety, taste, other people’s experiences, and something catchy. One participant thought it would be effective to have cooking demonstrations in supermarkets and use thermometers to

teach by example. Another person suggested teaching it in school in physical education and health classes. She thought that would be effective in teaching parents as well because children would pass the information on to their parents.

VII. Fight BAC! Awareness

None of the participants were familiar with the Fight BAC! character. They thought it would be effective to show BAC and the thermometer character fighting. They discussed serial commercials and thought the two characters could go through a series of events in different commercials so people would look forward to seeing the next one.