

## Sample Information Letter

**\*\*\*This is an example of a focus group study information letter created using the Information Consent Letter Guide. The purpose of this document is to show a finished product created from the ICL Guide. When drafting your own information letter it is best to refer primarily to the ICL Guide and not only this letter, as your study will have unique procedures and details\*\*\***

**Title of the study:** Health Canada Policy on Mandatory Labelling of Genetically Modified Food

**Faculty Supervisor:** Jane Doe, PhD, School of Public Health and Health Systems, University of Waterloo. Phone: 1-519-888-4567 x99999, Email: [jdoe1000@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jdoe1000@uwaterloo.ca)

**Student Investigator:** John Smith, MSc, School of Public Health and Health Systems, University of Waterloo. Phone: 1-519-888-4567 x99998, Email: [jsmith1000@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jsmith1000@uwaterloo.ca)

To help you make an informed decision regarding your participation, this letter will explain what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a research participant. If you do not understand something in the letter, please ask one of the investigators prior to consenting to the study. You will be provided with a copy of the information and consent form if you choose to participate in the study.

### What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a research study about the general public's perception of genetically modified (GM) food. The purpose of the study is to find out what students know about genetically modified (GM) foods, what they think or feel about GM foods, and specifically what they think about the labelling of GM foods. Past research has shown that a majority of Canadians (over 80%) want mandatory labelling of GM foods. However, Health Canada does not require labelling on GM food.

This study is being undertaken as part of my (John Smith) PhD research. I plan to combine my literature and document review of Health Canada policy on GM food with perspectives from the Canadian public.



## **I. Your responsibilities as a participant**

### **What does participation involve?**

Participation in the study will consist of attending one focus group with 3 to 5 other people. The session is expected to last 60-90 minutes. A light snack and refreshments will be provided. The focus group will be held in a classroom on the University of Waterloo campus at a time and date convenient for 4 to 6 participants. You will first complete a short demographic survey (age, gender, occupation, area of study, etc.), and then I will guide a discussion on genetically modified foods and Health Canada policy toward GM foods, especially the question of mandatory labelling. The types of questions that I will ask include; How important is it to you whether you are eating GM foods or not? Do you think Health Canada safety assessments of GM food are sufficient protection for consumers?

The session will be audio recorded to ensure an accurate transcript of the focus group. With your permission, anonymous quotations may be used in publications and/or presentations. Given the group format of this session I will ask you to keep in confidence information that identifies or could potentially identify a participant and/or their comments.

### **Who may participate in the study?**

In order to participate in the study you must be at least 17 years of age and able to speak and understand English.

## **II. Your rights as a participant**

### **Is participation in the study voluntary?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to leave the study at any time by communicating this to the focus group facilitator. Any information you provided up to that point will not be used. You may decline to answer any question(s) you prefer not to answer. You can request your data be removed from the study up until February 2018 as it is not possible to withdraw you data once my thesis has been submitted. Please note that due to the focus group format it may be difficult to remove all of your data.

### **Will I receive anything for participating in the study?**

To thank you for your time you will receive a \$20 gift card to Goodness Me health food store. If you leave the study during the focus group you will still receive the gift card. The amount received is taxable. It is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.



If you are not a University of Waterloo student/staff/faculty member, you will be also be reimbursed for parking or public transit expenses.

### **What are the possible benefits of the study?**

Participation in this study may not provide any personal benefit to you. I hope the data from the focus groups will aid in my examination of Health Canada Policy toward GM foods and contribute to the public discussion on the mandatory labelling of GM food.

### **What are the risks associated with the study?**

There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. If a question, or the discussion, makes you uncomfortable, you can choose not to answer. See above for more details on voluntary participation.

### **Will my identity be known to others?**

The research team and the other participants in the focus group will know what you said.

### **Will my information be kept confidential?**

The information you share will be kept confidential. Identifying information will be removed from the transcripts and the audio recordings will be deleted after I defend my thesis (expected to be summer 2018). The transcripts and other electronic data will be retained for a minimum of 7 years, after which they will be destroyed. Data will be stored in an encrypted folder on my password protected laptop. Only the research team will have access to study data. No identifying information will be used in my thesis or any presentations or publications based on this research. Although we will ask all participants in your focus group to maintain confidentiality, we cannot guarantee that they will do so.

## **III. Questions, comments, or concerns**

### **Who is sponsoring/funding this study?**

This study is funded by a Canadian Institutes of Health Research project grant.



### **Has the study received ethics clearance?**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 99999). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca).

### **Who should I contact if I have questions regarding my participation in the study?**

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact John Smith at 1-519-888-4567 x99998 or by email at [jsmith1000@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jsmith1000@uwaterloo.ca).

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## Consent Form

By providing your consent, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

**Title of the study:** Health Canada Policy on Mandatory Labelling of Genetically Modified Food

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study conducted by John Smith, under the supervision of Dr. Jane Doe, School of Public Health and Health Systems, University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to the study and have received satisfactory answers to my questions and any additional details.

I was informed that participation in the study is voluntary and that I can withdraw this consent by informing the researcher.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE# 99999). If you have questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca).

For all other questions contact John Smith at [jsmith1000@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jsmith1000@uwaterloo.ca).

- I am aware the focus group will be audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.
- I give permission for the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes from this research.

I agree of my own free will to participate in the study.

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's/Witness' signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_