

Food Safety, Canadians & COVID-19

Researchers conducted focus groups to investigate how and why Canadians engaged in different food handling and hand hygiene behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Behaviours Influenced by the Pandemic

"When I'm at the grocery store, I feel like everything around me is contaminated and I try to touch as little as I possibly can."

Hand Washing

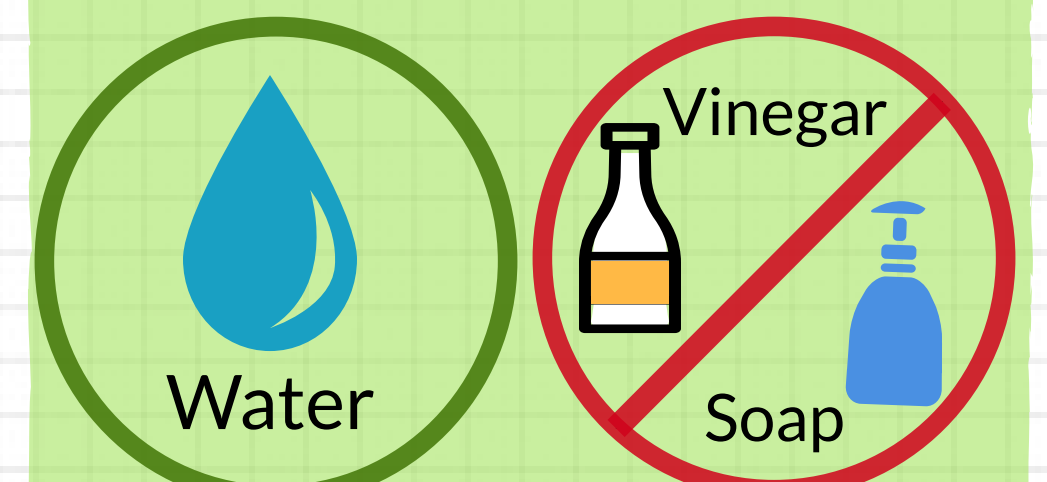
Grocery Shopping



Quantity
Trips

Sanitation

Produce Washing



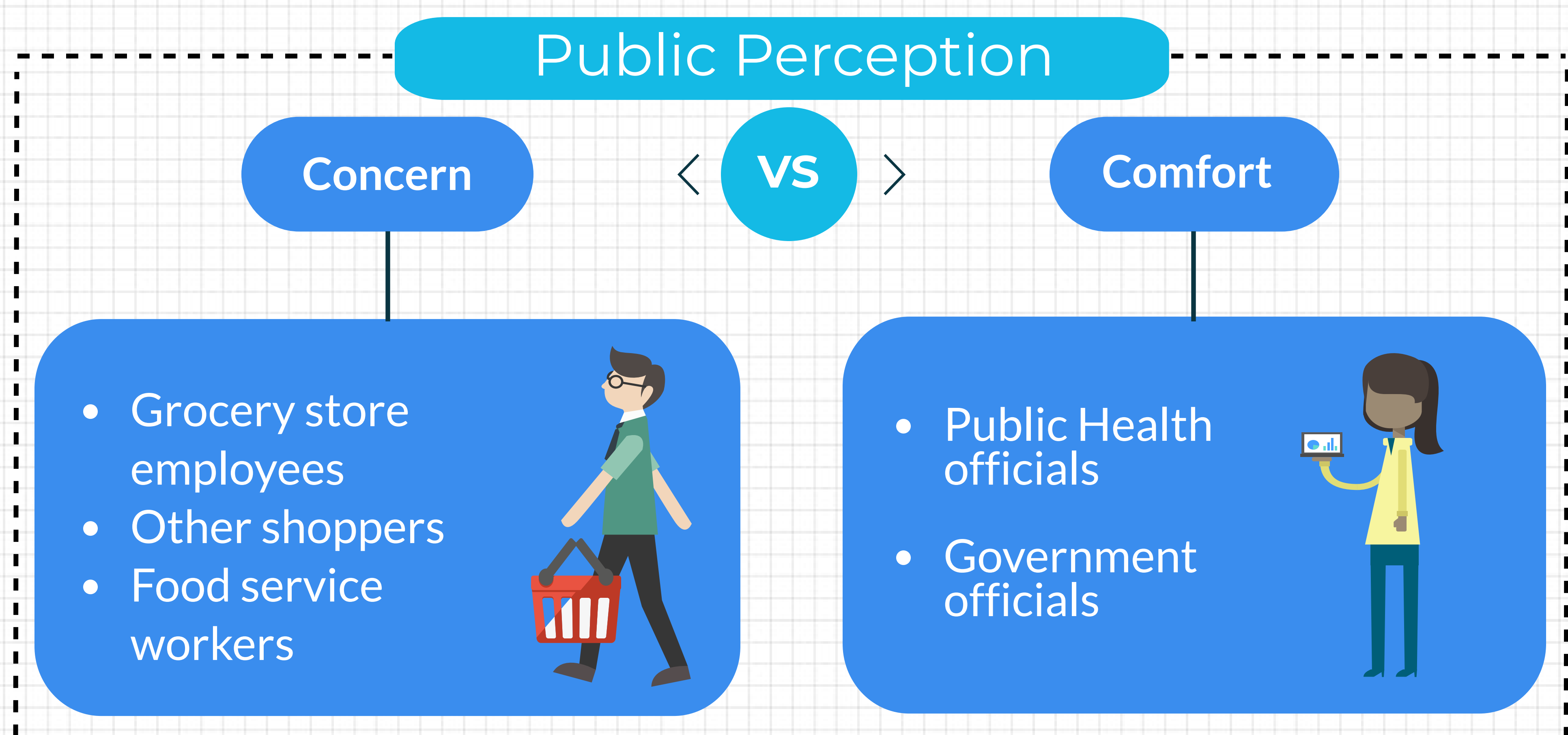
Though researchers noted both practices, washing produce with chemicals is **not recommended** due to potential harms.

Canadians changed a number of food handling and hand hygiene in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Influence of Others

Other people were viewed as sources of both concern and comfort. Many consumers were worried about COVID-19 risks due to other's food handling and sanitation, but looked to experts as trusted sources of information.

"Maybe the food's packaging would also concern me. But the courier is the primary [worry]."



Emotion and Awareness

"I also (embarrassingly) stockpiled at the beginning of the pandemic."

People voiced a number of emotions connected to the pandemic. COVID-19 has alerted many to food safety issues. Some hope to continue their new habits (i.e. thorough hand washing) while others plan to return to old ones (i.e. toned down sanitation practices).

Fear



Catching the virus

Embarrassment



Panic buying

Anxiety



Sanitation & cleaning

Hope



Better hand hygiene

Routine Food Safety Practices

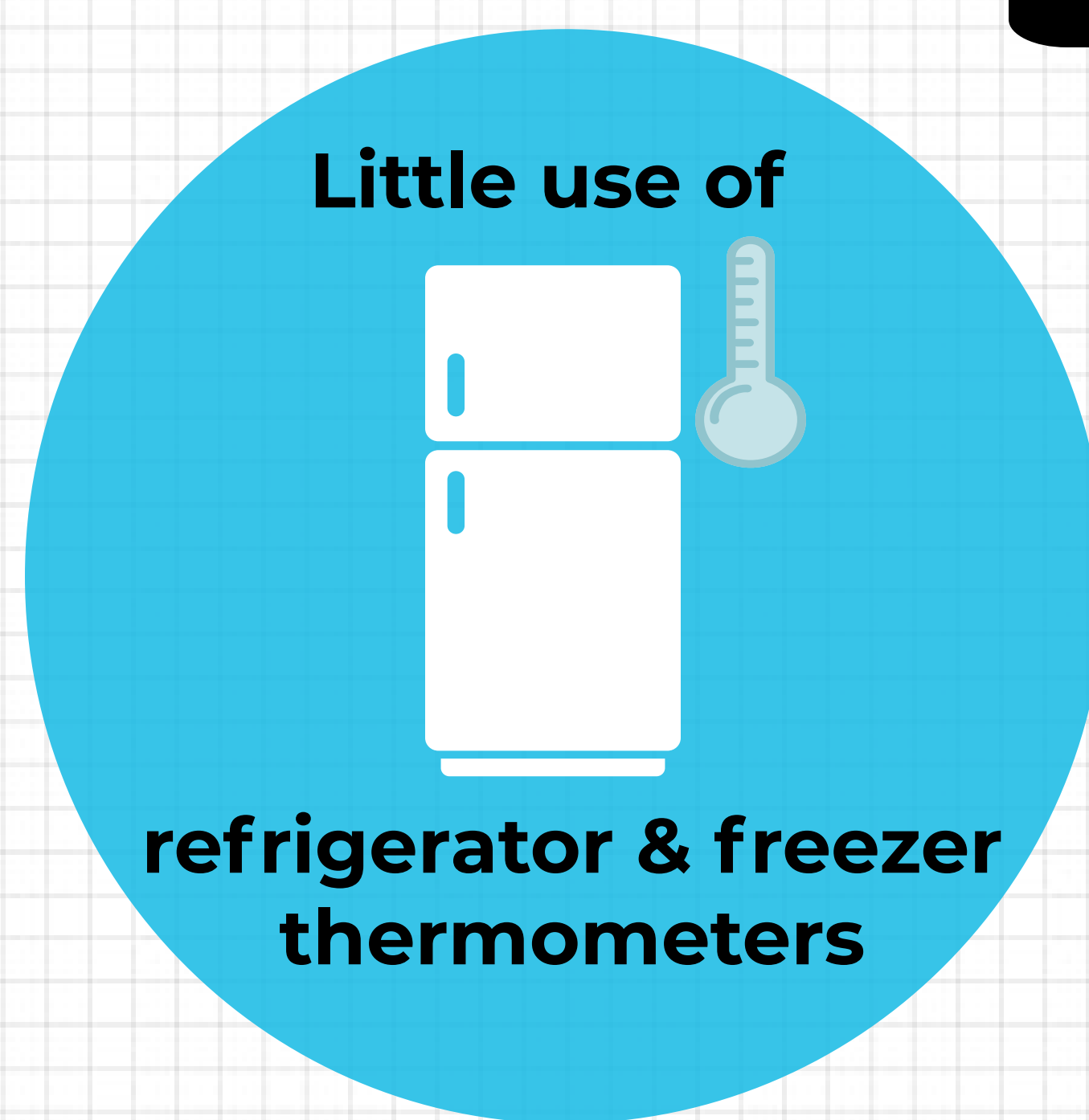
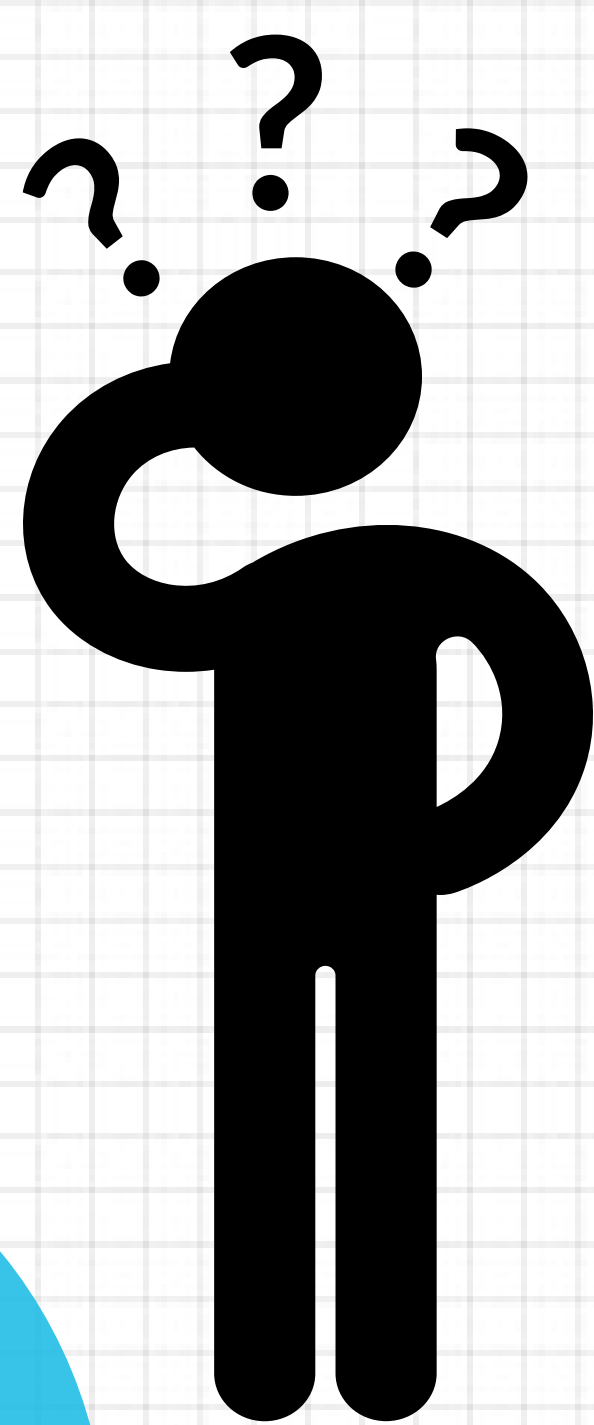
"I don't think I had many food safety and security concerns prior to the pandemic."



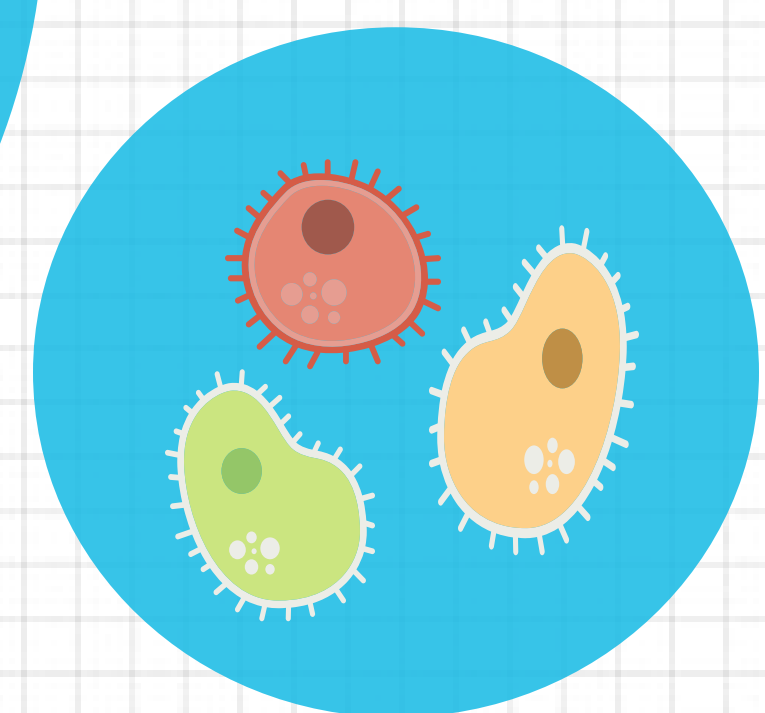
Best before dates
≠
food safety



Use of
senses to
check safety
of foods



Little use of
refrigerator & freezer
thermometers



Few people were concerned about food safety under normal circumstances (i.e. not related to the pandemic). Many did not know about proper food storage practices.



Clear and consistent messaging is key for promoting safe food practices.



Prepared by Robyn Haas and Ian Young, 2020.

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