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Milestone: Interviews and User Personas

The modern world is an increasingly health-conscious society, with a growing need for tools to help people make informed decisions about the food they consume. My proposed health app aims to fulfill this need by offering users a polished, efficient way to verify the nutrition of food products by simply scanning a bar code. This will provide users with a visual system that ranks and categorizes ingredients from healthy, neutral, or unhealthy (green, yellow, red), along with the ability to set, track, and change fitness goals while receiving health reminders. To ensure the design meets user needs, I have interviewed potential users, each with different backgrounds and priorities. Each insight I've gathered from these individuals will inform the design and functionality of the app ensuring it provides a valuable and easy-to-use experience.

Interview Participants

- Young woman (early 20s): Fitness enthusiast, focused on clean eating.

- Man (mid-30s): Nutritionist, interested in exercising more.

- Middle-aged mom: Focused on finding healthier options for her family.

- Middle-aged man: Needs to change his diet due to medical restrictions.

Key Responses

1. How do you currently track the nutritional content of the food you buy? What challenges do you face with this process?

- Young woman: "I use my notes app, but I have to manually enter or copy and paste, which gets to be tedious and time-consuming. I usually try to buy clean, non-processed foods without additives like dyes and random chemicals."

- Man (nutritionist): "I have an excel sheet and I read labels since I know what to look for and avoid. It can be difficult if I'm trying to compare different items or trying to find an alternative if my go-to is out of stock."

- Middle-aged mom: "I don't really keep much track of anything. I try to, but I'm usually pressed for time and grab what I know my husband and kids like to eat. When it comes to healthier options, I try to buy more organic things or products with less chemicals but there are still a bunch of things on the labels that I don't quite get like 'natural flavors'"

- Middle-aged man: "I try to find items that are low in fat, sugar, and salt but I hate constantly checking labels for things that work with my health issues. I don't like to spend all day in the store reading lines of gibberish."

2. Would a barcode scanner that instantly displays the healthiness of ingredients help you make better food choices? Why or why not?

- Young woman: "Yes, it would save me a lot of time and make the process simpler. It would also be great if I could save the items I buy frequently, so I don't have to constantly keep track."

- Man (nutritionist): "I think it can save me plenty of time, especially if I want to try out new products."

- Middle-aged mom: "I definitely think it would make a difference. Like I said I'm usually pressed for time, so if there's something that can make my life even slightly easier, I'll jump at it."
- Middle-aged man: "It would be very helpful. I think that would take away the stress of reading each and every label to find something that works for me."

3. How important is it to you that the app provides a visual ranking (red, yellow, green) of how healthy ingredients are? Would this influence your shopping habits?
   - Young woman: "Very important, I can make quick decisions at a glance"
   - Man (nutritionist): "Pretty handy for buying something new or quick, but not really necessary for the things I'm already familiar with"
   - Middle-aged mom: "That sounds extremely useful. I would rely on the rankings to choose healthier options"
   - Middle-aged man: "It's absolutely important. I would like a simpler system to find foods that are safe for me"

4. What specific information would you want to see after scanning a product barcode?
   - Young woman: "A list of the ingredients, a breakdown of the nutritional facts, and maybe a warning about unhealthy add-ins that certain products sneak in"
   - Man (nutritionist): "I'd like to see detailed micro and macro nutrient information and a quick and easy highlight about unhealthy ingredients"
   - Middle-aged mom: "Information about sugar content, calories, and unhealthy chemicals I'd like to avoid feeding everybody"
   - Middle-aged man: "An immediate warning about sodium, sugar, and fat content, and a warning about any ingredients I want to avoid."

Interview Analysis

- **Time Efficiency and Simplicity:** Each person expressed a need for an app that can save them time by simplifying the overall shopping process. They said a barcode scanner that can quickly display health information is a significant time-saver, especially if you regularly compare products or are unfamiliar with certain brands and items.

- **Color-Coded Ranking**: The visual health graphic is particularly valuable to all participants. The young woman, middle-aged mom, and middle-aged man all discussed how this feature would streamline and influence their shopping decisions, making it simple to identify healthy and unhealthy products. Even the nutritionist felt it would be useful when trying out new or unfamiliar products.

- **Detailed Product Information**: All participants want a visual health ranking, and they expect to see specific information such as ingredient lists and breakdowns. The young woman and nutritionist emphasized the importance of macronutrient details and warnings about unhealthy additives, while the middle-aged man focused on key factors like sodium and sugar due to his medical needs.

- **Health goals**: Both the young woman and middle-aged man voiced a need for features that allow them to track fitness goals and monitor their progress over time. These users would benefit from the ability to log and reuse previous purchases, adjust goals, and receive real-time feedback.

Unexpected Insights

Medical-Related Features: The middle-aged man's dietary restrictions show the potential for the app to offer more personalized health warnings based on personal needs. This opens up the

possibility for a feature that lets users set restrictions (for example, low sodium, high protein) and receive customized recommendations.

Product Familiarity: As stated by the nutritionist's response, the app can be useful for scanning new products, however users who already know what they're buying may not need as much guidance or find it redundant. With that in mind, the visual ranking system is still helpful for quick decision-making.

Target Demographic and Personas

My food app's primary demographic consists of individuals with a strong interest or a pressing need to improve their overall well-being. This includes health-conscious consumers who actively manage their diet due to fitness goals or medical conditions and casual users who wish to make healthier lifestyle choices without significant impact on their daily routines. These people may be motivated by the desire for convenient, reliable tools that help them make easy decisions about their health choices. Whether they are maintaining medical restrictions like low-sodium or low-sugar diets, or simply looking for ways to eat better, they value simplicity, ease of use, and actionable information that seamlessly fits into their lives.

Persona 1: The Health-Conscious Consumer

Emily, a 48-year-old office manager was recently diagnosed with high blood pressure and has a family history of diabetes, leading her to focus more on her health and diet. She enjoys light exercise like yoga and walking to help maintain her overall wellness. On weekends, Emily spends time meal-prepping for the week, making sure the food she eats aligns with her low-sodium, low-sugar dietary restrictions. She's dedicated to managing her health, but grocery

shopping has become time-consuming as she has to check every label to make sure the items fit her needs. Emily values convenience and tools that make it easy to understand nutritional information quickly and reliably. Emily wants an app that helps her make healthier choices without overwhelming her, as her schedule is already busy enough with work and her health. When she finds a product that aligns with her diet, she feels relief and confidence in her choices, knowing that it supports her medical condition. For her, having a tool to facilitate this process would reduce stress and allow her to shop with ease.

Quote: "With my medical conditions, I don't have time to check every label. I need an app that makes it easy and simple for me to stay on track and find foods that are safe for me."

Persona 2: The Casual Health Seeker

Alex is a 24-year-old sales associate with a hectic work schedule, and while he enjoys eating out and indulging in fast food occasionally, he's been looking for ways to make better food choices. He's not interested in strict diets or counting every calorie. Instead, he prefers to take a balanced approach to eating healthier without compromising the convenience he enjoys. In his free time, Alex likes hanging out with friends and going to events where healthier options aren't always available. Alex is looking for an app that helps him identify healthier alternatives

to the foods he loves without disrupting his routine. He's looking for something quick and easy to use, especially when he's shopping or needs to buy a quick meal between shifts. Alex feels motivated when he sees progress in his health journey, but he doesn't want to feel pressured into making drastic changes. An app that guides him toward healthier choices in a straightforward and flexible way would help empower him without affecting his lifestyle.

Quote: "I'm not looking for a complete diet overhaul, just something to help me make healthier choices without giving up too much of the foods I enjoy."

In conclusion, simplicity is the most important aspect of the app's design, as it will allow users to integrate it into their daily lives without adding unnecessary friction. Whether managing medical conditions or casually trying to eat better, users need a tool that delivers clear, quick information to help them make the best possible food choices with ease. Both personas, the health-conscious consumer, and the casual health seeker, emphasize the importance of convenience, as did each interviewee. From scanning products to instantly assess nutritional value, to receiving personalized notifications, users want a seamless experience that instantly plugs into their busy lives. By addressing the needs of those seeking better health, either due to

medical restrictions or general lifestyle improvements, the app's simple, intuitive design will

increase the likelihood that users continue to rely on it, building healthier and sustainable habits.