



FLAVORED TOBACCO* PRODUCTS

*The term “tobacco” used here, and throughout this fact sheet, refers to commercial tobacco products and not to sacred and traditional use of tobacco by some American Indian communities.



WHAT TYPES OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE FLAVORED?

Flavored tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, electronic cigarettes (aka e-cigarettes or vapes), and shisha (the tobacco used in hookah). These products help the tobacco industry get around the FDA’s 2009 ban of flavored cigarettes other than menthol. Menthol is the only flavor allowed in cigarettes.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON FLAVORS USED IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS?

There are more than 15,000 e-cigarette flavors on the market including a variety of youth-friendly flavors like *Cereal Milk*, *Bazooka Sour Straws* and *Gummy Worm*. E-cigarettes, specifically disposable vapes, are the most popular tobacco product used by youth.²

Cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, vapes and shisha are sold in fruit, candy, dessert and novelty flavors. Popular flavors include chocolate, piña colada, apple, grape, berry, cotton candy, bubble gum, mango, mint/ wintergreen and menthol.

These are “truly candy-flavored tobacco products” as the same chemical flavorings used in tobacco products are also used in popular candy and fruity drinks.³

Tobacco companies add menthol to tobacco products to cool the throat and make them taste better.⁴

WHO USES FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS?

The tobacco industry⁵ uses flavored tobacco to attract the next generation of smokers.

Young people are much more likely to use flavored tobacco products than adults, and most young users said they would no longer use the product if it was not flavored.⁶

In fact, 85 percent of youth who vape use fruit, candy or menthol flavored products.⁷

Vape product packaging is available in colorful designs and often resembles popular imagery familiar to youth.



Vapes come in thousands of flavors such as Rainbow Candy (shown above), Blue Raspberry Ice and Cotton Candy



Cheap cigars come in bright packages and a wide variety of flavors, such as grape, strawberry, blueberry, tropical fusion and chocolate/vanilla swirl.

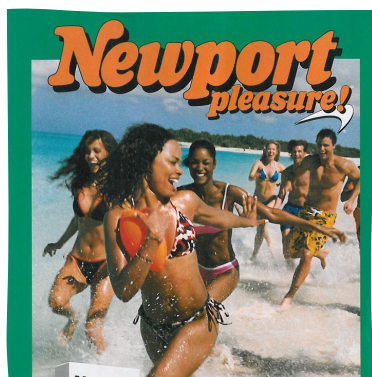


Photo Credit: Trinkets and Trash



Nontherapeutic nicotine lozenges, nicotine pouches and nicotine gummies like these pictured above are the second most prevalent nicotine product used by adolescents.

MORE ABOUT MENTHOL FLAVORED TOBACCO



The tobacco industry heavily targets African Americans with menthol tobacco by advertising in popular magazines.



Photo credit: Tricketts and Trash



Photo credit: Tricketts and Trash



Photo credit: Tricketts and Trash

References are available at ansrmn.org/flavors

The tobacco industry has a long history of aggressively targeting certain populations with menthol tobacco marketing including racial and ethnic minority groups, particularly African Americans; youth; women; and LGBTQ+ people.^{9,10}

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT COMMUNITIES?

Flavored tobacco is a threat to health equity. For example, because of industry targeting, 85% of African American cigarette users smoke menthols.¹⁰ Menthol flavored tobacco is easier to start and harder to quit¹³ than quitting non-menthol cigarettes and African Americans menthol smokers may be even less successful quitting than menthol smokers from other populations.^{14, 15}

Compared to non-menthol, menthol cigarettes are associated with moving to regular smoking among youth and young adults.¹¹ People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) who smoke are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than heterosexual people who smoke.¹²

WHAT CAN COMMUNITIES DO ABOUT FLAVORED PRODUCTS?

States and localities can adopt sales restrictions to address menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products that appeal to youth. Six states and more than 170 U.S. localities have banned the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol cigarettes.¹⁶ Limiting the sale of products, setting a minimum price or creating a minimum pack size are some of the ways communities can protect their youth by making flavored tobacco products less accessible and less appealing.¹⁷

Despite a 2020 FDA ruling banning the sale of certain pod-based flavored vape products, thousands of flavored vape products were left on the market, including all disposable vapes, the most popular device type used by young people.

The public is waiting for the FDA to act on its April 2022 proposed rule to ban menthol in cigarettes and cigars. While this is a much-needed step for curbing tobacco use, the final ruling will likely take years, and leaves out all other menthol flavored tobacco products.



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