



FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS



These pineapple-flavored cigars are cheap and easily accessible to youth.



Swisher Sweets come in flavors such as grape, strawberry and chocolate.



Smokeless and spit tobacco are available in flavors such as apple and cherry.

The tobacco industry's own internal documents state sweet products are "...for younger people, beginner cigarette smokers, teenagers...when you feel like a smoke, you want to be reminded of bubble gum."⁷

WHAT TYPES OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE FLAVORED?

Flavored tobacco products include cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, electronic cigarettes and shisha, the tobacco used in hookah. These products help the tobacco industry avoid the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) 2009 prohibition of flavored cigarettes.¹ Flavored tobacco products are often sold in attractive packaging for a low price. Cigars are frequently available for less than \$1.

MANY COMMON FLAVORS ARE USED IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

Cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, electronic cigarettes and shisha are sold in fruit, candy, dessert and novelty flavors. Popular flavors include chocolate, piña colada, apple, grape, berry, cotton candy, bubble gum and menthol. The same flavorings used in tobacco products are also used in candy and Kool-Aid.² These flavorings are often present in higher amounts in tobacco products than in candy.²

WHO USES FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS?

Flavoring in these products makes it easier for new, young users to take up tobacco, because the flavoring masks the harshness of the tobacco and enhances the user's experience.³ Nearly 90 percent of addicted adult smokers started smoking by age 18.⁴

Because of their sweet flavors, low cost and attractive packaging, flavored tobacco products are especially appealing to youth. Young people are much more likely to use flavored tobacco products than adults.³ The 2014 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) found that among current tobacco users, 73 percent of high school students and 56 percent of middle school students had used a flavored tobacco product in the past month.⁵

According to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 63 percent of the students who use electronic cigarettes use flavored e-cigarette juice. Also, 64 percent of those who use cigars use flavored cigars, and 61 percent of those who use hookah use flavored shisha.⁵

Studies show that young people perceive flavored tobacco products as tasting better and being safer than unflavored products, even though they are just as dangerous and addictive as cigarettes.⁶

WHAT DOES THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS?

Documents from the tobacco settlements revealed the "Graduation Theory," a method used by the tobacco industry that aimed to secure customer loyalty.⁸ This approach implies that new users start with milder tasting and flavored products. Then, they graduate to full-bodied, less flavored items that often contain more nicotine, resulting in a life-long addiction.

WHAT CAN COMMUNITIES DO ABOUT FLAVORED PRODUCTS?

Flavored tobacco products are a major public health concern because they encourage young people to start using tobacco. While the FDA banned flavored cigarettes other than menthol in 2009, the ban does not affect other tobacco products, many of which are now heavily marketed by the tobacco industry. The use of these products, especially among young people, has spiked.⁵

State and local governments can adopt laws that restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products within their jurisdiction. Limiting the sale of products, setting a minimum price or creating a minimum pack size for cigars are some of the ways communities can protect their youth. According to the 2000 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, raising prices of tobacco products decreases tobacco use among youth and young adults.⁹ Making flavored tobacco products less accessible has the potential to reduce youth tobacco use.

WHAT COMMUNITIES HAVE TAKEN A STANCE AGAINST FLAVORED PRODUCTS?

Locally, Minneapolis and Saint Paul restricted the sale of flavored tobacco, allowing flavored tobacco to only be sold in adult-only tobacco shops, meaning convenience stores can no longer sell flavored tobacco products. This significantly reduces availability and visibility of the products.

New York City and Providence, R.I., passed policies restricting flavored tobacco sales, with the exception of menthol-flavored products. Chicago passed an ordinance restricting sale of all flavored products, including menthol cigarettes, within 500 feet of schools except in adult-only tobacco retailers.



Shisha is the tobacco used in a hookah. It is often flavored.



E-cigarette liquid, known as e-juice, comes in numerous youth-friendly flavors, such as pomegranate, psychedelic peach and fruit stripe shown above.

SOURCES

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The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota is dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of tobacco use in Minnesota. (August, 2016)



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