The Truth About Flavored Tobacco

The use of flavored tobacco products such as cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, hookah tobacco, and e-liquids (used in e-cigarettes) has increased in recent years. These products use enticing flavors, colorful packaging and lower prices to hook a new generation of tobacco users.

A Public Health Threat

Enticing Fruit and Candy Flavors

Sweet flavors like watermelon, cherry, chocolate, mint, and gummy bear appeal to kids and teens. Flavorings mask the harsh taste of tobacco which make it easier for youth to initiate tobacco use.

Marketed to Young People

Flavored tobacco products often use the same flavoring chemicals as popular brands like Jolly Rancher, Kool-Aid, and Life Savers. Little cigars are often sold in small packages for less than a dollar and promoted as a low-cost alternative to cigarettes.

Colorful packaging and placement near the register makes them highly visible and attractive to kids.

Growing Teen Use

A majority of youth report flavoring as a leading reason for using tobacco products. This includes:

- 82% of e-cigarette users
- 79% of hookah users
- 74% of cigar users
- 69% of smokeless users

80% of young people who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored tobacco product.

7 out of 10 teens who use tobacco have used a flavored product in the past 30 days.
**Consequences for Our Youth**

**Long term addiction**

The U.S. Surgeon General has warned that flavored tobacco products help new users establish habits that can lead to long-term addiction.\(^7\)

Flavors like menthol in tobacco products make it harder for users to quit.\(^8\)

All nicotine products are addictive and increase the risk of developing serious health problems.\(^9\)

**Serious health risks**

The chemical Diacetyl, found in 75% of flavored e-liquids, is linked to bronchiolitis obliterans ("popcorn lung") which causes irreversible lung damage.\(^10,11\)

**Protecting Our Communities**

The FDA has banned the sale of flavored cigarettes (other than menthol) because they appeal to youth. But flavored e-cigarettes, e-liquid, cigars, hookah, and chewing tobacco continue to be sold.

Prohibiting the sale of all flavored tobacco products is a critical step to preventing another generation of young people from living with a lifetime of addiction.

---

**References**