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Addiction is Never Sweet or Cool



Which kinds of products are flavored?

Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) contain nicotine and chemicals known to cause cancer and produce an aerosol that can harm the lungs. [1]

Cigar smoke contains many of the same cancer-causing chemicals as cigarette smoke, and may even be more toxic. [2]

Smokeless Tobacco includes chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, snus and dissolvable products. It can be sniffed, chewed, or placed between the teeth and gums. Smokeless tobacco contains about 28 chemicals that can cause cancer. [3]

Hookah pipes are used for smoking shisha, a flavored tobacco frequently mixed with molasses, honey, and fruit. Use of shisha is associated with lung, stomach, and mouth cancer. Smoking shisha for 45 to 60 minutes is just as harmful as smoking 100 or more cigarettes. [4, 5]

Menthol Cigarettes are more addicting and harder to quit than cigarettes without menthol. [6, 7] Menthol masks the harsh taste of tobacco and makes cigarettes very appealing to beginner smokers. [8]



Why is flavored tobacco an issue?

Flavors, including menthol, make it easier to start smoking

Flavors are very tempting because they taste good, and make tobacco smoke less harsh and easier to breathe in. With its cool, minty taste, menthol covers up the harshness of tobacco and makes it easier to smoke. [8, 9]

More young people are using flavored products

Most teens who use tobacco start with a flavored product. [10] E-liquids and shisha come in many candy and fruit flavors like bubblegum, cotton candy and apple. [11] Many of these products are tempting to young people because they are sold in colorful packaging that makes them look like candy. [12]

Flavors, especially menthol, make it harder to quit

Flavors make it easier to start smoking and make it harder to quit. [13] Menthol actually makes cigarettes more addictive. [6] People who smoke menthol cigarettes are less likely to quit than other smokers. [7]

Many young people think that flavors make tobacco and smoking safer

Flavors and menthol may make smoke feel less harsh, but it does not make smoking any safer. Flavored tobacco is just as dangerous and addicting as non-flavored tobacco. [14]



Who Uses Menthol and Flavored Tobacco Products in California?



- 48% of high school cigarette smokers say they normally smoke menthol flavored cigarettes. [15]
- 53% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) adults who smoke usually smoke menthol cigarettes (compared to only 27% of straight adult smokers). [16]
- 71.5% of Black, 51% of American Indian, 35% of Hispanic, 23% of Asian, and 18.5% of White adult smokers say that they usually smoke menthol cigarettes. [16]
- 36% of female adult smokers say that they usually smoke menthol cigarettes (compared to 25% of male cigarette smokers). [16]
- 54% of people between the ages of 18-24 who use other-tobacco products (OTP), report using a flavored OTP in the past month compared to 15% of 25-44 year old OTP users, 5% of 45-64 year old OTP users, and 1.7% of OTP users over 65 years of age. [16]
- 38% of e-cigarette users between the ages of 18-24 have smoked a flavored e-cigarette in the past month compared to 17% of 25-44 year old e-cigarette smokers, 5% of 45-64 year old e-cigarette smokers, and 1.5% of e-cigarette smokers over 65. [16]



How can you make a difference?

Talk to your children and their friends about the dangers of smoking at around age five or six. Share with them if family members have died or are sick from tobacco use. Tell them about how flavors are used to make tobacco less harsh and make people want to try them. Flavors and menthol do not make tobacco safer.

Make your home smoke-free and don't use tobacco in front of children.

Make your voice heard! Speak out about how flavors entice kids into wanting to use tobacco products and how menthol cigarettes are more addictive than non-flavored cigarettes. Write a letter to the newspaper, an opinion piece, a blog or use Facebook and other social media to tell others what you think.

Keep learning and teaching others about policies that make it harder to buy menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products.

Get help with quitting. Call 1-800-NO-BUTTS (1-800-662-8887) for free quitting help for yourself, a family member or friend.

