



FLAVORED COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PRODUCTS*

BIG TOBACCO TARGETS KIDS WITH FLAVORED PRODUCTS

Flavored commercial tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, e-cigarettes (also known as vapes) and shisha (tobacco used in hookah). These products help the tobacco industry bypass the FDA's 2009 ban of flavored cigarettes other than menthol.¹ Menthol is the only flavor allowed in cigarettes.



Photo credit: ANSR-MN

Vape packaging often has colorful designs and resembles popular imagery familiar to youth.



Photo credit: Tobacco-Free Alliance

Vapes come in thousands of flavors such as Mixed Berry Ice and Sour Rainbow Berries (shown above).

COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE OFFERED IN THOUSANDS OF FLAVORS THAT APPEAL TO YOUTH

- There are **over 15,000** nicotine vape flavors available, many of which are designed to appeal to young users by mimicking the names and flavors of popular candies. Brands like “Cloud Nurdz,” “Bazooka Sour Straws,” and names like “Gummy Worm” are just a few examples of how vape products often blur the line between candy and nicotine, making them especially enticing to kids.
- Vape devices, specifically disposables, are the most popular commercial tobacco product used by youth.²
- Cigars, chewing tobacco, blunt wraps, vapes and shisha are sold in fruit, candy, dessert and novelty flavors.

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



THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY USES FLAVORED PRODUCTS TO ATTRACT THE NEXT GENERATION OF SMOKERS³

- Young people are more likely to use flavored commercial tobacco, and most would quit if flavors were removed.⁴
- In 2023, three fourths of Minnesota students (76.3%) who had used commercial tobacco said the first product they tried was flavored.⁵
- Even more alarming, 93.3% of high school and middle school students who vaped in the last month chose flavored products.⁵

ZYN & THE RISE IN POPULARITY OF NICOTINE POUCHES

Nicotine pouches, specifically the brand Zyn, are growing in popularity among youth in large part because they offer a discrete way to obtain a nicotine fix without alerting adults to nicotine use.⁶

See our 'Oral Nicotine Products' factsheet for more information



MORE ABOUT MENTHOL FLAVORED COMMERCIAL TOBACCO HARMS

Menthol makes smoking and using commercial tobacco easier to start and harder to quit. The tobacco industry adds menthol flavor to make smoking easier. It gives users a cooling feeling that makes smoking seem smoother and less irritating. Menthol increases nicotine absorption, leading to greater dependence.⁷

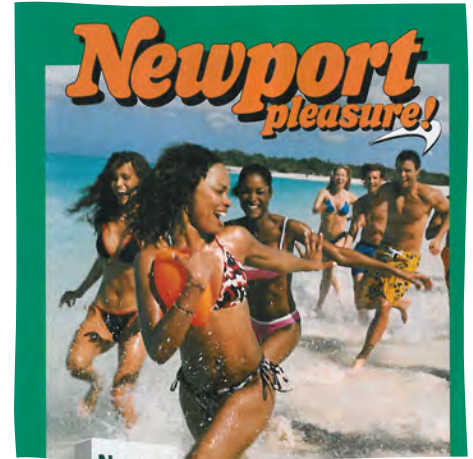
FLAVORED COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ESPECIALLY MENTHOL, ARE A THREAT TO HEALTH EQUITY

- The tobacco industry targets certain populations with menthol cigarette marketing using tactics like ads, giveaways, lower prices, lifestyle branding and event sponsorships.⁸ This aggressive targeted marketing contributes to health disparities.
- Due to tobacco industry targeting, 85% of African Americans who smoke, smoke menthols.⁹ Tobacco industry tactics contribute to American Indians and Alaska Natives having the highest tobacco use rates in the U.S., leading to high rates of tobacco-related deaths and diseases.¹⁰
- The tobacco industry designed menthol marketing ads to target LGBTQ+ communities. This targeting exacerbates tobacco-related health disparities within LGBTQ+ communities.¹¹

The tobacco industry also attracts customers by offering price discounts as seen below.



Photo credit: Trinkets and Trash



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

TAKE ACTION TO END THE SALE OF FLAVORED COMMERCIAL TOBACCO PRODUCTS

- States, cities, and counties can end the sales of menthol cigarettes and flavored commercial tobacco products to protect youth and targeted populations.
- Six states and over 380 cities and counties restrict flavored commercial tobacco sales. More than 190 of them ban or restrict the sale of menthol cigarettes.¹²
- Studies show that ending the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products reduces the chance that teens will ever try commercial tobacco.¹³
- The FDA could regulate all flavored commercial tobacco products but has been slow to act. In April 2022, the FDA proposed a ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars.¹⁴ The final ruling will likely take years and leaves out all other flavored commercial tobacco products.



Link to map of Minnesota cities and counties addressing the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products. Or at our website listed below.

*Tobacco in this document refers specifically to the use of manufactured, commercial tobacco products, and not to the sacred, medicinal and traditional use of tobacco by American Indians and other groups.

References are available at ansrmn.org/flavors



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