



Tobacco Flavoring

THE HISTORY AND WHERE WE ARE NOW

In 2009, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act gave the U.S Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco, and smokeless tobacco.¹ The bill also banned the sale of flavored cigarettes, except for menthol. In 2016, the FDA extended its regulatory authority to all “tobacco products” including electronic cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), cigars, hookah, pipe tobacco, nicotine gels, dissolvable not already subject to regulation, and other products that might meet the definition of “tobacco product” in the future.¹

FDA has only just begun to take steps to regulate these newer products -- over 15,000 different e-cigarette flavors currently exist in the marketplace leading to an epidemic of youth use, and relatively few studies have been conducted to investigate the safety and inhalation toxicity for flavored products.² In January 2020, the FDA issued guidance that removed some flavored cartridge-based electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) from the market, but exempted menthol- or tobacco-flavored cartridge-based e-cigarettes, any flavored disposable e-cigarettes, and e-liquids used in refillable, open tank systems. So, despite this ban, between February 2020 and October 2021, total e-cigarette sales increased 53%, sales of non-tobacco flavored e-cigarettes increased by almost 74%, and sales of disposable devices increased 205%.³

Menthol is one of the most common flavor additives used in cigarettes and other tobacco products, accounting for 37% of the cigarette market in the U.S in 2021⁴ and an increase in sales from 10.7% to 61% among prefilled e-cigarette cartridges in 2020.⁵ Between February 2020 and October 2021, menthol-flavored e-cigarette sales increased by almost 44%.³ A 2013 FDA analysis con (a)-5.2 (n)-2.7 (increas.i3.982.9 tm2i 9 ((by1.1 (20l)3.93 (be16 e16 e1.9 (n)-mayttes incr4a)-5.6c

Fact Sheet: Tobacco Flavorings

OVERVIEW

Despite the success of tobacco prevention and cessation programs, tobacco use is still highly prevalent among youth and adult populations. A decrease in cigarette smoking among youth has coincided with an increase in the use of e-cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products.¹⁰ The 2016 Surgeon General Report on e-cigarettes concluded that flavors are among the most commonly cited reasons for using e-cigarettes among youth and young adults.¹¹ One national study found that younger age was a significant predictor of flavored tobacco product use.¹² The increased appeal of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products has been popularized by the marketing and promotion of “fun, enticing” flavorings to youth and also to adults looking for nicotine alternatives to cigarettes.

Results from the 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey indicated that >2.5 million high school and middle school students report current use of e-cigarettes.¹³

Almost 85% of youth users report using flavored e-cigarettes: Fruit (69.1%), candy/desserts (38.3%), mint (29.4%), menthol (26.6%), are the most popular flavors reported.¹³

Disposable e-cigarettes are the most popularly used devices among youth users (55.3%), and Puff Bar the most popular brand (29.7%)¹³

The PATH Study found that 81% of youth who had ever used a tobacco product started with a flavored product.¹²

Data from the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey demonstrated that almost 78% of current tobacco youth product users reported using a flavored tobacco product.¹⁴

ANTICIPATED HEALTH RISKS

Fact Sheet: Tobacco Flavorings

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