

The TRUTH™ About the Use of Flavors in Tobacco

Research estimates that every day 3,900 children and teenagers start smoking and 1,000 become daily smokers.¹

The development and promotion of flavored tobacco products is a major public health concern as sweet flavors are particularly appealing to youth.² Because flavors mask the harsh properties of tobacco and increase the acceptability of a toxic product,³ adding flavorings to tobacco products to make a dangerous and addictive product more appealing may be harm enhancing.⁹

Who Do Flavors Appeal To?

- Research shows flavors are a major driver of sales in the youth market and that youth want strong and intense flavors in the products they consume. While adults enjoy mild and natural flavors, kids prefer high impact flavors – they like products twice as sweet as adults.⁴
- Younger smokers are more open to unique and exotic flavors than their older counterparts.³
- Studies of youth expectations around other flavored tobacco products, like bidis and hookahs, have found that young smokers report choosing flavored products because they “taste better” and are perceived to be “safer.”⁵

The Tobacco Industry’s Use of Flavors

- Tobacco industry internal documents describe sweetened products as “...for younger people, beginner cigarette smokers, teenagers...when you feel like a smoke, you want to be reminded of bubblegum.”^{5,6}
- A former tobacco industry sales representative revealed that “cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I’m saying.”⁷
- “...the base of our business is the high school student.”⁸

Who Uses Flavored Tobacco Products?

- In 2004, 17-year-old smokers were more than twice as likely as those over the age of 25 to smoke flavored cigarettes, and they viewed flavored cigarettes as safer.⁹

How Do Flavors Affect Initiation and Addiction?

- Flavored products encourage youth smoking and initiation and help young occasional smokers to become daily smokers by reducing or masking the natural harshness and taste of tobacco smoke and increasing the acceptability of a toxic product. Flavors make it easier for youth to smoke successfully.⁴
- Flavor additives could also facilitate the development of tobacco dependence by enhancing the sensory rewards of smoking.¹⁰
- According to internal tobacco industry documents, a “graduation theory” was developed as a strategy for hooking new users, (especially kids). Documents suggest that new users will likely begin with products that are milder tasting, more flavored and easier to control in the mouth. Subsequently, a “natural progression of product switching [occurs] to brands that are more full-bodied, less flavored, have more concentrated ‘tobacco taste’ than the entry brand.”⁷
- Nearly 80 percent of all adult smokers first become regular smokers before the age of 18, and 90 percent do so before leaving their teens.¹¹

Can Flavors Be Toxic?

- Some brands of smokeless tobacco contain 700% more wintergreen flavorant (methyl salicylate) than candy. This exceeds the maximum acceptable daily intake established by the World Health Organization.¹²
- Both licorice and cocoa, when burned, produce carcinogens.¹³

Who Has Banned Flavors?

1. FDA banned sale of flavored cigarettes September 22, 2009. Currently the ban does not include smokeless tobacco or cigars and exempts menthol.¹⁴ The new FDA law does NOT block states and localities from banning tobacco products or any different types of tobacco products, such as flavored tobacco.
2. New York City banned the sale of ALL flavored tobacco products on October 28, 2009. The ban includes some exemptions.¹⁵
3. On July 1, 2009 Maine banned the sale of flavored cigarettes & cigars in the state.¹⁶
4. New Jersey banned the sale of flavored (exempting menthol and clove) cigarettes on October 1, 2008.¹⁷

What Kids Say About Flavored Tobacco⁴

- Travis Tippetts, 16 – started Cherry Skoal, explained that it is “a beginners product” that “helped me gradually go up the ladder.”
- Brian Woodard, 14 - “Cherry kind of prepared me to go all the way up, though I wasn’t planning on it preparing me.”
- Marty White, 15 – began habit at age 11 with Skoal Bandits. “Cherry is like the kindergarten for Copenhagen...”

A Candy-Like Experience

- The advertisements and packaging are comprised of stylish designs and bright colors that emphasize the flavor. ⁴



™ Swisher Int'l

Grape



™ Swisher Int'l

Cherry



™ KassirCo

Bubblegum



™ Altadis

Banana



™ Altadis

Strawberry



™ Altadis

Chocolate



™ Hershey, ™ Mars, ™ Cadbury Adams, ™ Link Snacks, Inc., ™ Altria, ™ RJ Reynolds

Can you tell the difference between what is candy vs. a tobacco product? Can your kids?

“If you are really and truly not going to sell to children, you are going to be out of business in 30 years.” Bennett LeBow, Chairman of Liggett Group ¹⁸



™ Cadbury Adams

™ RJ Reynolds

Melt away tobacco strips or chewing gum?



™ RJ Reynolds

™ Ferrero

Tobacco Orbs or Tic Tacs?



™ Hershey



™ RJ Reynolds

Chewing tobacco or breath mints?



™ RJ Reynolds

™ Mars

The package design is small, sleek and obscure. This tin of Snus (chewing tobacco that does not require the user to spit) can easily be mistaken by parents, teachers or coaches as a cell phone or mint tin in a pocket.

The TRUTH™

There is no safe tobacco product. Tobacco prevention saves lives and money. Eliminating tobacco use prevents disease, unnecessary medical bills, expensive health costs and loss in productivity. For evidence-based cessation assistance, tobacco users should be directed to see their health care provider and call 1.888.567.TRUTH for free and confidential help quitting.

For More Information:



Utah Tobacco Prevention
and Control Program
1-877-220-3466
www.tobaccofreeutah.org

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