

Public Hearing Facts, Stats, and Talking Points

General Talking Points about Flavors in Tobacco Products

Youth and young adults use flavored tobacco products more than other age groups. Youth and young adults perceive flavored tobacco products as more appealing, better tasting and less harmful than non-flavored tobacco products.

Youth and Young Adults

- In 2019, an estimated 4.31 million middle and high school students in the U.S. used a flavored tobacco product in the past 30 days.
 - 13.8% of middle and high school students used flavored e-cigarettes in the past 30 days.
 - 2.0% smoked menthol cigarettes
 - 2.2% smoked flavored cigars
 - 1.7% used smokeless tobacco
 - 0.8% used flavored hookah
 - 0.3% smoked flavored pipe tobacco
- In 2019, nearly 7 out of 10 youth who were current tobacco users reported they used a flavored tobacco product.

More than four out of five young adults ages 18 to 24 who have ever used tobacco reported that their first product was flavored.

According to the 2021 POW'R Against Tobacco Independent Adult Tobacco Survey, Westchester residents overwhelmingly agree (72%) more than disagree (12%) that "Candy and fruit flavors that are added to tobacco products, such as cigars, cigarillos, dip and chew, makes it easier for youth to start using these products.

Big Tobacco Marketing

Tobacco product manufacturers aggressively market flavored products in several ways, including emphasizing flavors in advertisements, paying to place them on store countertops, using colorful imagery on packaging and introducing new and limited-edition flavors.

Each year, the biggest tobacco companies in the US spend nearly \$8 billion on marketing for all tobacco products. That's almost \$1 million an hour!

Menthol Cigarettes (ex. Newport)

Evidence suggests that menthol cigarettes represent an even greater public health risk than traditional cigarettes.

- The flavor can lead to deeper and harder inhalation, increasing nicotine and tar intake
- The minty taste and odor can mask early symptoms of illness and disease
- They are easier to start and harder to quit

In New York State, menthol cigarettes are used by over half of all adult smokers (52%).

Black and Hispanic adults, however, smoke menthols almost exclusively:

- 86% of Black smokers use menthols
- 72% of Hispanic smokers use menthol

Menthol is not an “equal opportunity killer.” Menthol is specifically addicting African Americans at higher rates.

- Ninety-three percent of Black smokers *started* by using menthol cigarettes.
- Over 7 out of 10 African American youth ages 12-17 years who smoke use menthol cigarettes.
- Tobacco companies add menthol to make cigarettes seem less harsh and more appealing to new smokers and young people.
- Tobacco companies market menthol cigarettes as “smoother” than other cigarettes.

Menthol is aggressively marketed in Black communities.

- Menthol use among Black communities is a direct result of the tobacco industry's marketing practices and product manipulation.
- Historically, the marketing and promotion of menthol cigarettes have been targeted heavily toward African Americans through culturally tailored advertising and messages.
- Menthol products are given more shelf space in retail outlets within African American and other minority neighborhoods.
- In addition to being heavily advertised and widely available, certain tobacco products have been found to be priced lower in African American communities, making them more appealing, particularly to price-sensitive youth.

Smoking-related illnesses are the No. 1 cause of death in the African American community, surpassing all other causes of death, including AIDS, homicide, diabetes, and accidents.

- Black smokers smoke less but die of heart attacks, strokes and other causes linked to tobacco use at higher rates than white smokers

Menthol is also a driver of youth initiation

- When New York State ended the sale of flavored e-cigarettes statewide in May 2020, it was a significant step toward reducing youth tobacco use.
- However, other flavored tobacco products, such as menthol cigarettes, continue to present an obstacle to decreasing tobacco use among young people
- About half of youth smokers ages 12-17 smoke menthols
- Young people who initiate using menthol cigarettes are more likely to become addicted and become long-term daily smokers

According to a 2021 POWR Against Tobacco’s Independent Adult Tobacco Survey:

- More than half (52%) of Westchester Adults who smoke report that they use menthol cigarettes.
- A majority of Westchester residents agree that menthol in cigarettes makes it easier for youth to start smoking AND agree that menthol in cigarettes makes it harder for current smokers to quit.

Hookah

Hookah smoking is NOT a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. Although many users think it is less harmful, hookah smoking has many of the same health risks as cigarette smoking. Some of these health risks include:

- Oral cancer
- Lung cancer
- Stomach cancer
- Cancer of the esophagus
- Reduced lung function
- Decreased fertility

In 2018, the Monitoring the Future survey found that—

- Nearly 1 in every 13 high school students in the United States had used a hookah to smoke tobacco during the previous year.
- About 1 in every 8 young adults aged 19-30 years had used a hookah to smoke tobacco during the previous year.

While a typical cigarette requires about 8 to 10 puffs, an hour-long hookah session may involve 100 to 200 puffs, potentially exposing the user to more smoke over a greater period of time.

Cigars, Little Cigars and Cigarillos (Swisher sweets, Dutch Masters, Black & Milds, etc.)

Cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes and cigar smoke is at least as toxic as cigarette smoke, if not more. Large cigars can deliver as much as 10 times the nicotine, two times the tar, and more than five times the carbon monoxide of a filtered cigarette.

- Cigar smoking is associated with higher risk of oral, esophageal, laryngeal, and lung cancer.
- 77.3% of high school and middle school students who are current cigar smokers also used at least one other tobacco product.
- Little cigars and cigarillos often contain candy or fruit flavors like sour apple, cherry, grape, and chocolate that appeal to kids and young adults. Flavors are popular with young smokers. 64.7% of recent cigar smokers in high school reported smoking flavored cigars.
- According to the National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), the prevalence of past 30-day cigar use was 8.6% among all high schools students and 1.6% among all middle school students in 2015.
- Among youth, cigar use is highest in male and African American populations.