

FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS ATTRACT & ADDICT OUR YOUTH

Menthol makes it easier to start and harder to quit.



More than 80% of youth who have ever tried tobacco started with a flavored product.¹



280,000 of New York's youth now under 18 are projected to die prematurely from smoking.³



More than half (54%) of youth ages 12-17 years who smoke use menthol cigarettes.²



To get around the 2009 federal ban on flavored cigarettes, the tobacco industry sells “little cigars”— similar to cigarettes in shape, size, filters and packaging—in a wide range of sweet and fruity flavors popular with youth.

The tobacco industry's decades-long targeting of Black Americans with menthol products has caused devastating health disparities.

- Overall, 85% of African American smokers use menthol cigarettes, compared to 29% of White smokers.
- African American people usually start smoking at an older age than White people do but are more likely to die from smoking-related disease.

¹ "Flavored Tobacco Products Attract Kids: Brief Overview of Key Issues." Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2022. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0399.pdf>.

² "Menthol and Cigarettes." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated July 16, 2021. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/tobacco_industry/menthol-cigarettes/index.html

³ "The Toll of Tobacco in New York." Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, updated Jan. 20, 2023. https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/new_york

⁴ "Tobacco Use Among African Americans." Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2021. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0006.pdf>

⁵ Delnevo, CD, et al. "Banning Menthol Cigarettes: A Social Justice Issue Long Overdue." *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 22(10): 1673-1675, 2020.

⁶ "African American Communities Experience a Health Burden from Commercial Tobacco Use." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Smoking & Tobacco Use, June 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/health-equity/african-american/health-burden.html>

INFORMATION ABOUT MENTHOL BANS AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The tobacco industry created a narrative that communities of color CHOOSE menthol tobacco products and that taking them off the market would be an injustice. WRONG! The reality is that Big Tobacco has TARGETED communities of color for decades. By PUSHING menthol products directly into these communities, the tobacco industry has created generations of long-term nicotine addiction and devastating health consequences for huge profits.

Q. Won't a menthol ban just create an illicit market?

A. No. The Tobacco Industry likes to make that claim because what's good for public health is bad for Big Tobacco's bottom line. But data from countries that have banned menthol doesn't back that up. In fact, recent research shows that after Canada's menthol ban, there was no increase in the illicit purchase of menthol or non-menthol cigarettes from the main source of illicit cigarettes in that country. Surveys show that a ban would encourage Black Americans to quit menthol rather than seek them from an illicit market.

Q. Won't a ban on menthol increase the potential for unjustly criminalizing Black Americans and put them at risk?

A. That's a scare tactic the tobacco industry pays its spokespersons to use to strike fear in the Black community—the community most harmed by Big Tobacco's aggressive and targeted menthol marketing that's gone on for decades. A menthol ban BANS THE MANUFACTURE and RETAIL SALE of menthol tobacco products. There are no penalties or law enforcement for INDIVIDUALS who purchase, possess, or use menthol products.

The NAACP issued a statement calling for a menthol ban, saying, "It's about time we prioritize the health and well-being of African Americans."

Q. Isn't the FDA taking care of banning menthol-flavored tobacco products?

A. The wheels of change turn very slowly in Washington, D.C., and it could be years before any proposed FDA ban would be implemented.

In the meantime, everyday tobacco companies continue to use menthol to target, attract and addict new Black American smokers. Plus, more than 80% of youth who have ever tried tobacco started with a flavored product,¹ and more than half (54%) of youth ages 12-17 years who smoke use menthol cigarettes.²

As the tobacco industry fights against the proposed FDA ban, many communities across the country have proactively banned menthol to protect their residents from the manipulative, aggressive nature of menthol marketing and its deadly impact on Black American communities and youth.

Q. Why would flavored tobacco products be banned if flavored cannabis products are sold in New York State?

A. For decades, research has shown that flavored tobacco products attract youth and addict them. We have a new generation of nicotine-addicted youth who may struggle their entire lives with addiction. In fact, 80% of youth who have ever tried tobacco started with a flavored product,¹ and more than half (54%) of youth ages 12-17 years who smoke use menthol cigarettes,² which are easier to start and harder to quit. 280,000 of New York's youth now under 18 are projected to die prematurely from smoking.³

¹ Illicit cigarette purchasing after implementation of menthol cigarette bans in Canada: findings from the 2016-2018 ITC Four Country Smoking and Vaping Surveys. *Tobacco Control* published online first: Jan. 6, 2023. <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2023/01/06/tc-2022-057697.citation-tools>

² "Tobacco Industry Talking Points." The Center for Black Health and Equity, 2022. <https://www.centerforblackhealth.org/tobaccoindustrytakingpoints>

³ "NAACP Statement on FDA Plan to Ban Sale of Menthol and E-Cigarettes." NAACP, April 29, 2021. <https://naacp.org/articles/naacp-statement-fda-plan-ban-sale-menthol-and-e-cigarettes>