



Below are some facts about flavored tobacco.

Feel free to use some of this information in your art. Or click on the links to learn more and do your own research! The best art submissions will include 1 or 2 facts about flavored tobacco.

[The tobacco industry has a long history of deliberately using flavors to attract kids.](#) Cigarettes containing flavors other than menthol can no longer be sold in the United States – but many other tobacco products, including little cigars, cigarillos, chew and e-cigarettes, are still sold in kid-friendly flavors such as bubble gum, strawberry and grape. And menthol flavored cigarettes are targeted to and disproportionately used by groups including African Americans, young people, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) communities.

Flavored products are driving the youth vaping epidemic. [In fact, almost 85% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored products.](#) E-cigarettes are sold in over 15,000 flavors, from mint and menthol to gummy bear and cotton candy. According to the latest data from the [2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey](#), 19.6% of high school students and 4.7% of middle school students – 3.6 million youth altogether – were current e-cigarette users.

For decades before e-cigarettes and other flavored products were introduced, menthol (mint) cigarettes were the starter product aimed at young people. In the early 2000s, the tobacco industry also created cherry, vanilla, and alcoholic drink flavored cigarettes to lure young consumers to a life of addiction. These flavored cigarettes were mostly outlawed by Congress in 2008, [but the tobacco industry fought African-American leaders and won, and have been allowed to continue selling mint cigarettes.](#)

In the early 2010s, flavored little cigars and later e-cigarettes (vapes) stepped in as the new routes to recruit young people to become new [nicotine customers](#), replacing the [more than 1,300 Americans who die every single day from tobacco use.](#)

In 2019 in Multnomah County, about 1 in 4 youth in 11th grade (23%) used a tobacco product in the last month. [That same year, 1 in 3 eleventh graders reported that they had EVER used a flavored tobacco product \(33%\).](#)

In the 1950s, less than 10% of Black smokers used menthol cigarettes. Today, about [85% of Black smokers smoke](#) menthols. The tobacco industry [targeted the Black community and continues to do so](#) with concert sponsorships, advertising, and up to 15x the advertising in Black neighborhoods than white neighborhoods. [Today, tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death among Black Americans.](#) It claims 45,000 Black lives each year.

More than 23% of Hispanic/Latino youth in high school report e-cigarette use. There are widely ranging differences in tobacco use among Hispanic/Latino subgroups, based on gender, potentially wave of immigration, and other factors. [That said, the tobacco industry has been working to target these communities to increase nicotine addiction.](#)

[LGBTQ youth have higher tobacco use rates than their heterosexual peers.](#) Many LGBTQ youth may be at higher risk of tobacco use due to factors such as lack of support from family and peers, and resulting depression and stressful life events, not to mention intentional tobacco industry targeting of their community. [LGBTQ smoking rates are high and menthol cigarette use is higher than the general population, especially among bisexual and lesbian women.](#)

According to data from the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey, 3 out of 10 LGB high schoolers are tobacco users, with unknown but likely very high rates among Transgender and Questioning youth.

American Indian youth have the [highest rates of tobacco use among racial/ethnic groups](#), mainly due to racism and economic oppression coupled with tobacco industry marketing and intentionally confusing industry tactics around traditional and commercial tobacco. Early youth experimentation leads to Native Americans adults having the highest rates of tobacco use and related health disparities. Some communities have lower smoking rates and many tribal nations are [actively working to combat the impact of flavored tobacco](#).

For the last couple of decades, cigar manufacturers designed flavored little cigars to serve as “starter” products for youth and young adults. Flavors add appeal and help mask the harshness, making the products easier to smoke. Recently, there has been an explosion of cheap, flavored cigars (have you seen yellow stickers showing the price 3 for 99-cents?). [The tobacco industry has long noted flavors as a market expansion product for youth.](#)

Youth and young adults are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of nicotine. [Nicotine exposure can harm the developing adolescent brain, which continues to develop into the mid-20s. Specifically, using nicotine in adolescence can harm the prefrontal cortex](#), or the part of the brain that controls attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

[Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide.](#) Every year in the United States, [approximately 480,000 deaths and over \\$300 billion in healthcare spending](#) and productivity losses are attributable to cigarette smoking. [In Multnomah County, 1,203 people die from tobacco use every year.](#) That is more than 3 people we lose every day, the leading cause of disease and death in our community, and totally preventable.

[Communities are standing up, not allowing the sale of flavored tobacco in their city/county/state.](#)

5 states have acted to protect kids and community from candy-flavored tobacco products and more than 310 cities/counties have done the same!

Please help us spread the word about the contest, and [submit your youth/young adult art TODAY!](#)

<http://bit.ly/3BhB4cVC>