



Menthol Cigarettes

What teens should know

As the trusted champion for lung health, the American Lung Association is committed to creating a tobacco-free future and saving lives. We advocate for smokefree public spaces, work to achieve tobacco regulation to protect public health and have helped a million people quit smoking.

While the number of people smoking continues to decrease, the presence of menthol on the market continues to be an issue. As of 2022, about 36% of all cigarette sales were menthol cigarettes. Now, new legislation could limit the future sale of these products, potentially saving hundreds of thousands of lives each year—and we need your help to make it happen

**BECAUSE, WHEN YOU CAN'T BREATHE,
NOTHING ELSE MATTERS®.**

What is menthol?

- Menthol is a chemical that makes cigarettes easier to smoke and harder to quit.¹
- Found naturally in mint plants, menthol creates a cooling effect that reduces the harshness of cigarette smoke and suppresses coughing.¹
- This makes menthol cigarettes more appealing to young or inexperienced smokers, and research shows that menthol products are more likely to addict youth.¹

Who does the tobacco industry target with menthol?

- You are being targeted. The tobacco industry has a well-documented history of developing and marketing menthol cigarettes to racial and ethnic minorities, youth and women.²⁻⁷
- Evidence from tobacco industry documents shows that tobacco companies specifically targeted African Americans with menthol cigarette advertising.⁷⁻¹⁰
- As a result, more than 80% of Black Americans who smoke use menthol cigarettes, and they are nearly 3 times more likely to use menthol than white smokers.^{11,12}
- Women are 17% more likely than men to smoke menthols.¹²

Are menthols less harmful than other cigarettes?

- No, menthol cigarettes aren't safer. Menthol helps the body absorb more harmful chemicals because the menthol cigarette smoke is easier to inhale. This creates a stronger nicotine addiction and makes quitting mentholated tobacco products even harder.²

Aren't flavored cigarettes illegal?

- The 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act ended the sale of flavored cigarettes – except menthol. Shortly thereafter, the Food and Drug Administration's Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee recommended that FDA use its regulatory powers to end the sale of these products.
- There are currently no federal restrictions on flavors in other tobacco products, including little cigars, cigarillos, and smokeless tobacco.
- On May 4, 2022, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) formally issued two proposed rules—one to remove menthol cigarettes from the market, and the other to remove flavored cigars.

How can I help end mentholated tobacco use and unjust health disparities?

- Our collective voices are powerful. Tell President Biden to finalize the FDA's proposed rules on menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars through the Lung Association's Lung Action Network at: Lung.org/Stop-Menthol.
- Remember: No tobacco product use is safe. If you know someone who wants to quit, encourage them to call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit Lung.org.

Contact

Contact your local American Lung Association office for information on youth leadership groups and other youth tobacco initiatives.

1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) Lung.org



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