



# Cigars & Flavored Cigars

## What schools 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 oversight of tobacco products to protect public health and have helped a million people quit smoking.

Cigars, including flavored cigars, cause death and disease and are a public health hazard. Like other flavored tobacco products, flavored cigars are appealing to young people and are designed to hook smokers early in life. We're in support of ending the sale of flavored cigars and ending exemptions for cigar smoking in smokefree laws that rob our loved ones of good health.

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

### Are young people being targeted by cigar brands?

- Cigars are just as popular as cigarettes among youth.<sup>1</sup>
- Almost 91% of cigar sales occur in convenience stores and gas stations where young people visit frequently.<sup>2</sup>
- Many cigarillos are sold cheaply, such as 2 for \$1.00.<sup>3</sup>
- Convenience stores use eye-level window signs and ad displays at the register to make sure young people see their messaging.<sup>3</sup>

### Are cigars less dangerous than cigarettes?

- All cigar smokers, whether they inhale or not, expose their lips, tongue, and throat to smoke and its toxic and cancer-causing chemicals.<sup>4</sup>
- Cigar smoking causes cancer of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, and lung.<sup>5</sup>
- Daily cigar smokers, particularly those who inhale, have an increased risk of heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and heart attack.<sup>5</sup>
- Cigar smoke is composed of the same toxic and carcinogenic chemicals as cigarette smoke.<sup>6,7</sup> Secondhand cigar smoke is incredibly harmful to non-smokers who are exposed, just as it's harmful for those cigar users as well.<sup>8</sup>

### How do flavors influence cigar smoking?

- The 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey found that close to 65% of youth who smoke cigars use flavored cigars.<sup>9</sup>
- Between 81% and 86% of youth and young adults who ever used tobacco reported a flavored product as their first tobacco product.<sup>10</sup>
- There are currently no federal restrictions on characterizing flavors in other tobacco products, such as little cigars, cigarillos, and smokeless tobacco.

## What should schools do to protect students from these products?

- Institute and enforce comprehensive tobacco-free campus policies that include all mentholated tobacco products.
- Offer quit programs on site, as many students are already nicotine-dependent.
- Provide education rather than punishment around the harms of tobacco products.
- Ensure all staff know the different kinds of tobacco products on the market and the dangers they pose to students.

## How can we help end flavored cigar use among young people?

- On May 4, 2022, the FDA formally issued two proposed rules—one to remove menthol cigarettes from the market and the other to remove flavored cigars.
- 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](https://lung.org/Stop-Menthol).
- Remember: No tobacco 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](https://lung.org).

## American Lung Association Programs

- N-O-T® (Not On Tobacco) is a teen vaping and smoking cessation program and provides the tools, information, and support to quit for good. [Lung.org/NOT](https://lung.org/NOT)
- INDEPTH® is an alternative –to–suspension program for students who violate school tobacco use policy. [Lung.org/INDEPTH](https://lung.org/INDEPTH)
- Our Vape-Free Schools Initiative helps schools navigate the public health crisis of youth vaping and allows them to become recognized leaders by offering students education, cessation, and support. [Lung.org/vape-free-schools](https://lung.org/vape-free-schools).

## Contact

Our Lung Helpline is a free service staffed by registered nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, and certified tobacco cessation specialists.

- **1-800-LUNG-USA** (1-800-586-4872) [Lung.org/helpline](https://lung.org/helpline)
- Learn more about these and other programs at [Lung.org](https://lung.org).

## References

- 1 American Heart Association Flavored Cigar Fact Sheet, Page 2
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- 3 Riell H. Cigars Face New Challenges. *CStore Decisions*. 2021.
- 4 Smokefree Atlanta Cigar Fact Sheet
- 5 National Cancer Institute. Cigar Smoking and Cancer – National Cancer Institute. 2010
- 6 Rosenberry ZR, Pickworth WB, Koszowski B. Large Cigars: Smoking Topography and Toxicant Exposure. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research: Official Journal of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco*. 2018;20(2):183–191.
- 7 Pickworth WB, Rosenberry ZR, Yi D, Pitts EN, Lord-Adem W, Koszowski B. Cigarillo and Little Cigar Mainstream Smoke Constituents from Replicated Human Smoking. *Chemical Research in Toxicology*. 2018;31(4):251–258.
- 8 American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation Ban Cigar Lounges Fact Sheet
- 9 Tobacco Product Use Among U.S. Middle and High School Students — National Youth Tobacco Survey, 2023 | *MMWR* ([cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov))
- 10 Ambrose, BK, et al. Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 17, 1871-3, 2015, [bit.ly/498HPyR](https://bit.ly/498HPyR)

