

The Tobacco Industry Targets Youth

Tobacco product use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. Tobacco is one consumer product that kills people when used exactly as intended. Close to 90% of people who use tobacco products start before they turn 18 years old. For the tobacco industry to recruit new customers to replace the ones dying off, they need to addict our children. Once a person starts to smoke, he or she will become dependent on nicotine quickly. Nicotine addiction is the big factor that keeps you smoking.



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"Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids"

The Lies of the Tobacco Industry.

Image is important. The tobacco industry does not care if you know that their products are harmful, you just need to believe that they are appealing and cool. For example, they want you to see smoking as something that makes you glamorous, attractive, sexy, successful, exciting, independent, pleasant, and popular. Celebrities are often paid to be role models using tobacco products. The marketing approach is to have you think of a strong cowboy or a beautiful actress. They don't want you to think about the serious and life-threatening health problems that come with tobacco use and exposure such as heart attacks, cancer, emphysema, stillbirth, and sudden infant death.

There have been many lawsuits filed against tobacco companies regarding misleading advertising and costly health problems. It has been difficult to fully combat the power of marketing. One large settlement involved 46 states against some of the largest tobacco companies. As part of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, a provision was made that the money states received could not be used to threaten the image of their products. When the US Federal Drug Enforcement Agency (FDA)

wanted to put graphic warning labels on cigarette packs that showed the truth about tobacco risks and health problems, the tobacco industry successfully sued the government to block the new labeling. Their "freedom" to promote their highly addictive product was more important than protecting our youth.

Creating products that appeal to youth:

The tobacco industry has been very clever in coming up with ways to help attract young people to smoking. For example many products have a chemical called menthol added that makes tobacco less harsh, so it is easier to inhale. That makes menthol cigarettes the ideal starter product—and we see that children who start with menthol cigarettes are more likely to go on to be regular smokers.

There are government restrictions banning added flavors in cigarettes such as vanilla, chocolate and cherry. However, this ban does not apply to other non-cigarette tobacco products. For example, cigars and Electronic cigarettes can be found in a variety

of fruit and candy flavors—making them more appealing as a highly addictive ‘candy’.

Youth are very price sensitive. The higher the cost of a product, the less likely they are to use it. Although there are usually fairly costly taxes on buying cigarettes, this is not the case for other tobacco products such as electronic cigarettes and cigars. The tobacco industry has taken advantage of this and created inexpensive, often candy flavored products to attract youth. Walk into almost any convenience store and you can find candy flavored cigars selling for as little as 2 for 99 cents.

What can you do as a parent?

First—Set a good example. Kids learn what they see. When parents don’t use tobacco, their kids are less likely to start. Call 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669) for free help in stopping smoking.

Second—Tell your kids the truth about tobacco in ways that they can relate to and mean something to them. Tell them how the industry lies to them. Tell them how tobacco makes their breath smell, rots their teeth, hurts their sports performance, and ages them faster. You can find more information from the Truth Initiative at <https://www.thetruth.com/>

Third—Be an advocate for effective tobacco control

policies and for adequate funding of tobacco control programs. Do this through your voice and your vote! A major cause of kids starting tobacco use is tobacco promotion. Even simple things—such as raising the age for sale to 21 years, increasing tobacco taxes, and prohibiting use of flavors in other tobacco products can go a long way to protecting children. Let your legislators and representatives know that you support tobacco control—and oppose any efforts to create loopholes to exempt any class of tobacco products from tobacco control efforts.

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Resources:

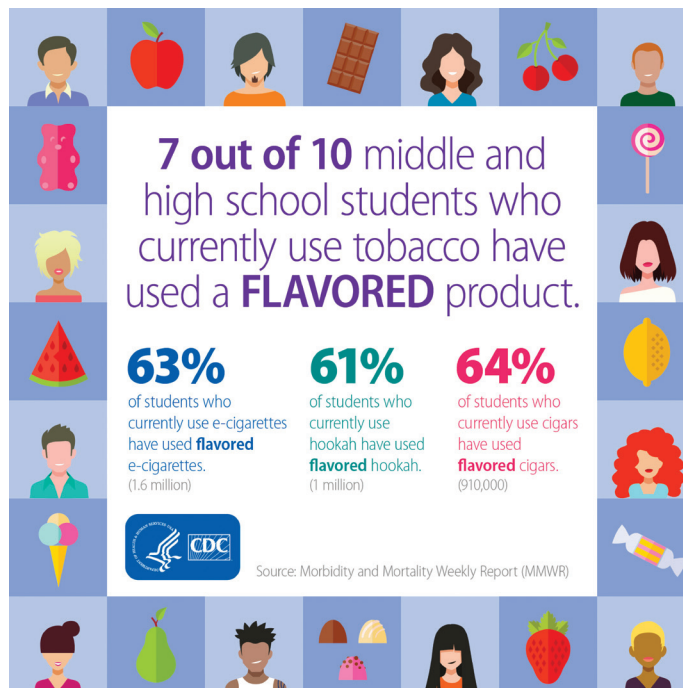
Tobacco 21—An Important Public Policy to Protect our Youth
<https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/tobacco-21.pdf>

Truth Initiative
<https://truthinitiative.org/>

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
<http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/index.htm>

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