

# MENTHOL 101



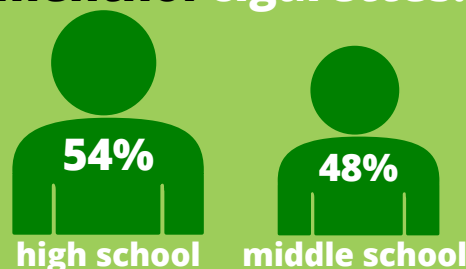
## Menthol is the **ONLY** legal cigarette flavor still on the market.

- ➔ In 2009, the Tobacco Control Act outlawed flavored cigarettes, but exempted menthol due to tobacco industry lobbying. This is troubling because menthol makes cigarettes **easier to smoke and harder to quit.**<sup>1</sup>

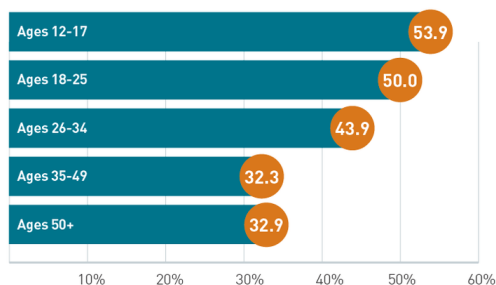
## Why are menthol cigarettes dangerous?

- ➔ Menthol creates a cooling effect, reduces the harshness of cigarette smoke and suppresses coughing, which makes inhaling smoke more tolerable.<sup>2,3</sup>
- ➔ Menthol's effects make cigarettes more appealing to young, inexperienced smokers and leads to nicotine addiction.<sup>4</sup>

### Percentage of youth smokers who use menthol cigarettes.



Menthol cigarette use among current smokers in the U.S. by age, 2012-2014



Source: Tobacco control

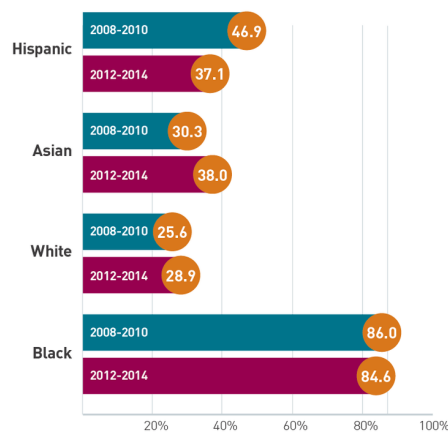
## Menthol hooks kids.

- ➔ **More than half** (54%) of youth ages 12-17 who smoke use menthol cigarettes. That's higher than any other age group.<sup>5</sup>
- ➔ For black youth ages 12-17 who smoke, **seven out of 10** use menthol cigarettes.<sup>5</sup>
- ➔ A nationwide study showed that of young adults (over 18) who smoked, a majority started with menthol cigarettes.<sup>6,7</sup>

## Different groups are at higher risk.

- ➔ **Black adults have the highest percentage** of menthol cigarette use compared to other racial and ethnic groups.<sup>5</sup>
- ➔ A higher percentage of black adults who smoke started by using menthol cigarettes (93%) than white adults who smoke (44%).<sup>7</sup>
- ➔ **Other high risk groups include:** women,<sup>5,8</sup> those who identify as LGBTQ,<sup>9</sup> people with lower income and education levels,<sup>5</sup> and those with mental health conditions.<sup>10</sup>

Menthol cigarette use among current smokers (aged 12+) in the U.S. by race/ethnicity



Source: Tobacco control



## Marketing menthol is big business

- ➔ Menthol makes up **35% of the U.S. cigarette market** - the highest proportion since major tobacco companies were required to report that data.<sup>11</sup>
- ➔ Tobacco advertising is more influential on teenage smoking behavior than peer pressure.<sup>12</sup>

➔ Big Tobacco has shamelessly and disproportionately marketed mentholated brands to black communities for decades.<sup>8</sup>

## Eliminate ALL menthol tobacco - cigarettes and e-cigarettes

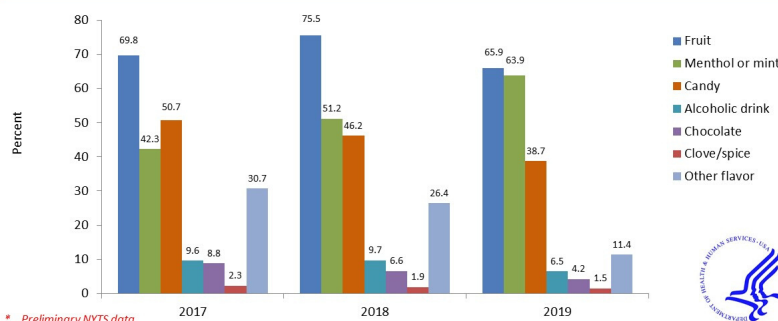
Mint and menthol make up a large majority of Juul's sales, with estimates as high as 80%.<sup>13</sup>

The evidence indicates that if any e-cigarette flavors are left on the market, kids will shift from one flavor to another.

In November 2018, Juul removed other flavors – but not mint and menthol – from stores. In response, youth easily substituted mango and fruit with mint and menthol.

From 2018 -2019, youth use of fruit flavors fell, while youth use of mint and menthol flavors increased by 50%.<sup>14</sup>

FLAVORS POPULAR AMONG HIGH SCHOOL USERS OF E-CIGARETTES\*



## FDA warns menthol harms public health, but has failed to take action since 2009

The FDA has commissioned two reports which conclude **"the removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace would benefit public health" and save thousands of lives, almost 1/3 would be black lives.**<sup>15</sup>



➔ If menthol cigarettes were removed from the market:

39% of all menthol smokers,<sup>16</sup>

45% of black menthol smokers,<sup>16</sup>

and nearly 65% of young menthol smokers report they would try to quit.<sup>17</sup>

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