



Flavored Tobacco Products Are INITIATION Products, NOT CESSATION Products

There is no evidence that flavored tobacco products are healthier, nor used successfully for cessation. The evidence however does show that **flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, are easier to smoke, harder to quit and more likely to addict youth.**ⁱ

We want all Vermonters to be free from costly nicotine addiction, in order to live a long, healthy life.

The Vermont Medical Society, the American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, and the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians, representing over 2,600 Vermont physicians, support banning flavored tobacco products including menthol. Candy, fruit and menthol/mint flavored tobacco products have made the tobacco industry billions by targeting youth, **Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+** to create **new generations of Vermonters addicted to nicotine.**

Vermont Youth Use Continues to Skyrocket

According to 2019 YRBS data, **50 percent** of Vermont high-school students have tried e-cigarettes, while regular use of e-cigarettes (electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) ⁱⁱmore than doubled from **12% in 2017 to 26% in 2019. 80 percent of youth 12-17 yrs old started with a flavored product.**ⁱⁱⁱ

8 out of 10

teenagers who use tobacco started with a flavored product

Results from a **2019 survey of 478 Vermont high school students** show:

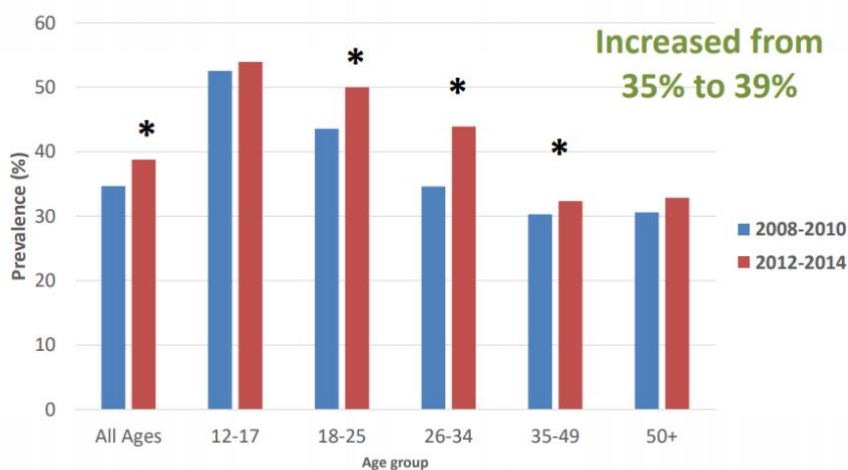
1. Of the students who have used e-cigarettes in the last month, more than **1/3** report that they use e-cigarette within 15 minutes of waking up – a true marker of dependency.
2. Those using flavored e-cigarettes were asked what they would do if they could not get flavored e-cigarettes anymore:
 - a) **43% would stop using e-cigarettes**
 - b) **34% would switch to cigarettes**
 - c) **23% would switch to unflavored e-cigarettes**

If You Exempt Menthol, Evidence Shows Youth Won't Quit – They Will Switch

Nationally, among high school students who use e-cigarettes, use of mint or menthol increased from **38% in 2018 to 57% in 2019**,^{iv} after Juul restricted sales of fruit and candy flavors. Juul has stopped selling mint flavor and evidence shows youth will now switch to menthol flavor in both e-cigarettes and combustible cigarettes, as over half of e-cigarette users report **dual use with other tobacco products.**^v

Dual Use Prevalence = 55.9% of e-cigarette users 13-25 yrs old dual use with other tobacco products. 54.6% of adult e-cigarette users also smoke cigarettes.

Prevalence of menthol cigarette use among past 30-day smokers, NSDUH



The tobacco industry says only older smokers use *menthol cigarettes*, yet the data shows **young smokers, 12-17 yrs. old, are the highest users of menthol cigarettes.**^{vi}

Health effects of ENDS ingredients

- **Nearly 90% of adult smokers began using tobacco before age 18.** The reward centers of the adolescent brain are particularly vulnerable to the effects of nicotine, as regular use of tobacco primes the brain for nicotine addiction and subsequent addictive behaviors.
- **Flavor additives are “generally recognized as “safe” for food, but not inhalation.**^{vii}
- Byproducts of heating e-liquid are not well understood and have been shown to be **irritants and sometimes carcinogens.**

Flavored E-cigarettes Are Initiating Nicotine Addiction in Youth, Not Promoting Cessation in Adults

The tobacco industry claims flavored e-cigarettes are helping adults quit smoking – yet as of **2018 only 3.2% of adults 25-64 yrs of age use e-cigarettes.**^{viii} Versus, **35.1% of youth and young adults 12-25 yrs old currently use e-cigarettes in 2019, which increased from 28.6% in 2018.**

ⁱ <https://truthinitiative.org/our-top-issues/flavors-issue>

ⁱⁱ Vermont Department of Health. VT Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Burlington, VT; 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2464690>

^{iv} Cullen KA, Gentzke AS, Sawdey MD, et al. e-Cigarette Use Among Youth in the United States, 2019. JAMA. 2019;322(21):2095–2103.

^v <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/e-cigarettes-facts-stats-and-regulations>

^{vi} Villanti AC, et al. Tob Control. 2016;25(Suppl 2):ii14-ii20.

^{vii} Tierney PA, Karpinski CD, Brown JE, Luo W, Pankow JF. Flavour chemicals in electronic cigarette fluids. Tob Control. 2016;25(e1):e10–e15

^{viii} <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/e-cigarettes-facts-stats-and-regulations>

Also, youth who start with menthol cigarettes are more likely to escalate their tobacco use behavior over time than those who started with non-flavored products. **More than half (54%) of youth ages 12-17 who smoke now use menthol cigarettes. Nearly 65% of young menthol smokers say they would quit smoking if menthol cigarettes were banned.**

We need to include menthol to prevent disproportionate targeting of African American and LGBTQ+ Vermonters African Americans die disproportionately from tobacco related diseases compared to other racial and ethnic groups. A key factor promoting this disparity is the high use rates of menthol tobacco by people of color as a direct result of aggressive marketing by the tobacco industry. **The use of menthol by blacks has grown from 5% in 1953 to 85% of black adult smokers and 7 out of 10 black youth smokers today. LGBTQ+ Vermonters smoking rate is at 22% which is significantly higher than the 16% of overall Vermonters who smoke.**

Key points re: menthol and flavored tobacco products

- **Menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products facilitate youth initiation and progression to regular tobacco use.**
- **Menthol cigarettes impede adult smoking cessation.**
- **Banning menthol and flavors in tobacco/e-cigarette products would reduce the number of tobacco users and thereby benefit public health.**



Coalition contacts:

Jill Sudhoff-Guerin, Policy & Communications Manager, Vermont Medical Society, jsudhoffguerin@vtmd.org
802.917.5817

Tina Zuk, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association Tina.Zuk@Heart.org 802.578.3466