

# Flavored tobacco products hook Maine kids.



[flavorshookkidsmaine.org](http://flavorshookkidsmaine.org)

**4 out of 5 Maine kids who have used tobacco started with a flavored product.**



**Tobacco companies have developed an array of menthol, mint, candy, and fruit-flavored products in colorful packaging to attract new users and keep them using tobacco.**

Winter Menthol. Strawberry Lemonade. Blue Razz. Banana Ice. Cotton Candy. The tobacco industry knows that 95% of adults who smoke start by age 21, so these flavors aren't for adults. Flavors hook kids.

**Half of youth who have ever tried smoking started with menthol cigarettes.**

**Menthol cigarettes are the most dangerous flavored tobacco product.**

Menthol flavoring makes it easier for youth to start smoking and become addicted to cigarettes. Menthol masks the harsh taste tobacco and numbs the throat, making the smoke easier to inhale more deeply. People who smoke menthol cigarettes are less likely to successfully quit smoking than other people who smoke.



**1 in 3 Maine high school students have used e-cigarettes; 1 in 5 are currently using a tobacco product—rates well above the national average.**



**Despite action by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), flavored e-cigarettes—especially menthol e-cigarettes and sweet-flavored disposables—remain widely available.**

Flavored tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and e-cigarettes, undermine Maine's efforts to reduce youth tobacco use. And while almost all e-cigarettes contain liquid nicotine, which the EPA classifies as an acute hazardous waste, too many Maine youth think it's just harmless flavoring.



**The tobacco industry has a long and lethal history of targeting kids and other communities with flavored products.**

Tobacco industry documents reveal aggressive marketing, including cheaper prices and more advertising of menthol cigarettes in African American neighborhoods. The tobacco industry has also targeted the lesbian, gay and bisexual community with predatory advertising in LGBTQ+ magazines and sponsorships of local Pride events and celebrations.



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**Maine is seeing an explosion of e-cigarette use (also known as “vaping”) among youth.**

This epidemic started with Juul, a high-tech device disguised as a USB drive that comes in a variety of flavors to entice kids. One Juul pod contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 cigarettes. This high concentration is a serious concern for youth, who are already uniquely susceptible to nicotine addiction. Juul is just one example of how the tobacco industry has adapted their products and their marketing tactics to attract their “replacement smokers.”

**Tobacco use puts our kids’ health and futures at risk.**

Smoking causes disease and disability, harming nearly every organ of the body. There is growing evidence that e-cigarettes can harm lung health. And now, the U.S. Surgeon General warns that nicotine exposure during adolescence and young adulthood can cause addiction and long-term harm to brain development, stating, “No matter how it's delivered, nicotine is harmful for youth and young adults.”

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