

The Facts and Health Consequences of Using Cigarillos

According to the 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), middle and high school students had similar rates of use of cigar products as cigarettes. This is a public health concern as youth and young adults who use cigar products may be unknowingly exposing themselves to many of the same harmful chemicals and addictive nicotine found in other combustible tobacco products, like cigarettes. Among all cigar products, cigarillos are the most popular type sold and used in the U.S., according to both sales data and research conducted among young adults.

Cigarillos Are Tobacco Products



- Cigarillos are one type of cigar product that look like slimmer versions of large cigars. They can come with or without a plastic or wooden tip.
- A cigarillo, including the wrap, is made of tobacco and contains nicotine.
- Like cigarettes, smoking cigar products can cause cancers of the lung, oral cavity, esophagus, larynx, pancreas, stomach, and bladder.
- Cigarillos are often sold in single or small packs and can come in a variety of flavors, like sweet/candy and fruit, which appeal to youth.
- Popular cigar product brands among youth include White Owl, Backwoods, Swisher Sweets, Black and Mild, and Dutch Masters.

A Note About Marijuana & Cigarillos

Many youth and young adults who use cigar products, and specifically cigarillos, do so by removing some or all of the tobacco in the middle and adding marijuana. FDA refers to this as “modified cigarillo use.” Data from focus groups with Black and Hispanic youth has shown that cigarillos are commonly referred to as “blunts,” regardless of whether they’re being used with marijuana.

Cigarillo Use Among Youth and Young Adults Is A Public Health Concern



In 2023,

420,000

middle and high school students

reported past 30-day use of a cigar product; a similar rate of past 30-day use of cigarettes (430,000 students) was reported.

Historical data shows that cigarillo use disproportionately impacts Black youth and young adults.

Data have shown that cigar smoking increased over time among non-Hispanic Black persons. Data also show that non-Hispanic Black youth and adults have higher rates of cigar use than people from other racial/ethnic groups.

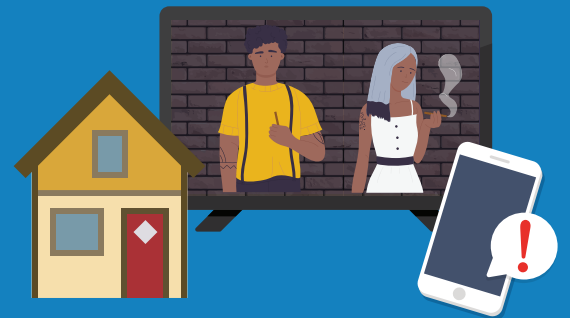


For example, cigarillos are advertised more heavily in Black communities, increasing the visibility, appeal, and availability of these tobacco products to youth and young adults. Not only is cigar product use promoted on social media, but marketers also often utilize influencers with connections to Black culture, and influencers in the hip-hop industry.

KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND LOW HARM PERCEPTIONS



Knowledge gaps and low harm perceptions of cigarillos among youth and young adults relative to other tobacco products contribute to the public health concern of cigar product use. For example, research by FDA found that some youth believe that only the filling of a cigarillo contains tobacco and are unaware that cigarillo wraps also contain tobacco and nicotine.



Cigarillo use among Black youth and young adults has been driven by diverse factors including peer cigarillo use, household/family cigarillo use, community norms and culture, access and marketing exposure, and popular culture.



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