

# Youth Cigar Use

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Although U.S. tobacco companies are prohibited from advertising to youth, tobacco companies manufacture and market cigar products in ways that appeal to youth and avoid restrictions. In recent years, the popularity of cigars, including cigarillos and little cigars, has increased rapidly in the United States. Cigars are exempt from many of the regulations placed on cigarettes.

## Cigars vs. Cigarettes

Cigars contain tobacco wrapped in a tobacco leaf or other substance that contains tobacco, while cigarettes contain tobacco wrapped in paper or any substance that does not contain tobacco.

- **Premium (large) cigars** typically contain 5 to 20 grams of tobacco, can measure over 7 inches in length, and do not have a filter.
- **Cigarillos** contain about 3 grams of tobacco, are slightly bigger than cigarettes or little cigars, and typically do not have a filter. Cigarillos are typically available in flavors that appeal to youth.
- **Little cigars** contain about 1 gram of tobacco, are similar in size and appearance to cigarettes, are wrapped in brown paper containing some tobacco leaf, and often have a filter. They are often sold in packs of 20 that look very similar to packs of cigarettes. Unlike cigarettes, little cigars are available in candy and fruit flavors.



## Cigar Use among Hoosier Youth

- In 2018, 6.6% of Hoosier middle school students and 18.3% of Hoosier high school students had ever tried smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars.
- In Indiana, about 2.1% of middle school students and 6.7% of high school students used cigars in the past 30 days in 2018, slightly higher than the U.S. rates of 1.5% among middle school and 5.0% among high school students in 2020.
- Use of cigars was slightly higher than cigarette smoking among Hoosier youth in 2018.
- Black high school youth in Indiana used cigars at a slightly higher rate (8.5%) than white (6.5%) and Hispanic (5.1%) high school youth in 2018. Retailers located in neighborhoods with the highest concentration of Black residents are more likely to sell cigarillos than neighborhoods with the lowest concentration of Black residents.

## Fast Facts

- Cigars contain nicotine, which is **highly addictive**.
- Nearly **1 in 5** Hoosier high school students have ever tried cigars.
- Cigars are often cheap and available in youth-appealing flavors.
- About **46%** of Hoosier high school students who use cigars smoke flavored cigars.
- Black youth across the US and in Indiana smoke cigars at higher rates compared to white or Hispanic youth.
- Cigar smoke contains the same toxic chemicals as cigarettes, and regular cigar smoking increases the risk of:
  - Lung cancer
  - Cancer of the lip, tongue, mouth and throat
  - Cancer of the larynx
  - Cancer of the esophagus
  - Lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis
  - Coronary heart disease
  - Gum disease and tooth loss

# Flavored Cigars

Although flavored cigarettes other than menthol cigarettes are banned in the United States, tobacco companies still manufacture and sell flavored cigars, often in candy, fruit, or other sweet flavors that appeal to youth.<sup>1</sup> This tailored marketing tactic by the tobacco industry pushes dangerous products to youth and other vulnerable groups. In Indiana, about 46% of high school youth who use cigars smoke flavored cigars.



# Marketing of Cigars

Cigars, especially cigarillos, are often sold in brightly colored, youth-appealing packaging. They may also be sold in any package size, including packages of just one or two cigars. This often makes cigars cheaper and more accessible to youth. In Indiana, 85% of retailers that sold cigarillos sold them for less than \$1.



Because youth are more sensitive to tobacco prices than adults, they often choose cheaper tobacco products. Cigar prices are typically lower than cigarette prices, and these lower prices may make cigar products more appealing and accessible to youth than cigarettes.<sup>1</sup> These marketing tactics also push dangerous commercial tobacco products into communities that have the fewest resources to deal with the health problems that come with them.

# Concerns about Cigar Use



**Youth cigar use may be a gateway to addiction and regular tobacco use. Once people start to use any form of commercial tobacco, it establishes behaviors that can lead to nicotine addiction and long-term use.**

- Cigars contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.
- Youth who use cigars commonly use cigars along with other tobacco products. In 2018, nearly half of Indiana high school students who used cigars (43%) also smoked cigarettes.



**Harmful Effects of Nicotine**

- In addition to being addictive, nicotine use may have adverse effects on adolescent brain development. Youth nicotine use in any form, including cigars, is therefore unsafe.



**Cigar use can be just as dangerous as cigarette smoking.**

- Regular cigar smoking increases the risk of many diseases including cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

# What Can You Do?



If you or someone you know needs to stop using tobacco, call **1-800-Quit-Now** or visit **QuitNowIndiana.com** for free support.



Join a **local tobacco control coalition** in your community.



**Encourage leaders** to support efforts to reform how commercial tobacco products, including cigars, are marketed and sold.