



AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Sweet flavors, cheap prices tempt kids to try little cigars

Sold in flavors like chocolate, grape and peach for a little over \$1, small cigars are tempting to many kids.

The sweet taste covers up the harshness of a regular cigar, and many kids think they are not as bad as cigarettes. However, flavored cigars can cause cancer, heart and lung disease, and other ongoing health problems, warns the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). They all also contain the highly addictive drug, nicotine, just like cigarettes do.

In an effort to stop kids from smoking, a law was passed in 2009 banning the sale of flavored cigarettes. Since the law does not include cigars, companies are packaging flavored cigarettes in cigar wrappers and selling them as little cigars. Some brands and flavors include Swisher Sweets Sweet, Chocolate Blunts, Phillies Sugarillos, White Owl Blunts Xtra Grape and Optimo Peach Cigarillos.

About 40% of middle school and high school students who smoke use little cigars, especially those sold in fruity, sweet flavors, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Youth Tobacco Survey.

Even occasional use of tobacco products by children can lead to lifelong addiction, and parents should not allow it, according to the AAP. If your child uses tobacco products such as cigarettes or little cigars, ask your pediatrician for guidance on how to help him or her stop.

It is easy for youths under 18 years old to buy tobacco products like little cigars. Even though it is against the law, many convenience stores and tobacco shops sell products to minors. Tobacco displays sometimes are placed next to candy so kids can see them.

Those who start using flavored tobacco products are more likely to keep using them, according to recent research. The only way to prevent this is to ban flavored tobacco in all forms, including cigars, electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, according to the AAP.

Parents who use tobacco also should quit. Each state has a hotline that can be accessed by calling 1-800-QUITNOW. Counselors offer information and free support. Parents who cannot quit smoking should not smoke in homes or cars.



Photo courtesy of
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

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