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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition-Alternatives to Menthol Cigarettes May Pose Significant Addiction and Health Risks

Researchers at Rutgers Center for Tobacco Studies and The Ohio State University contend the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should extend the ban on menthol flavored cigarettes and cigars to include potential substitutes like menthol pipe tobacco and cigarette tubes.

Per the study' findings, the Researchers are urging the FDA to maximize the benefits of menthol cigarette ban restrictions based on new evidence showing the appeal and addiction potential of these substitutes in adults who smoke menthol cigarettes.

According to Rutgers researchers, tobacco companies have rebranded their roll-your-own cigarette tobacco as pipe tobacco to avoid taxes and rebranded flavored cigarettes as flavored cigars to skirt a federal ban. Companies have been advertising pipe tobacco and cigarette tubes alongside cigarettes and filtered cigars. The products tested in the study are likely to be products that tobacco companies will promote following a ban on menthol cigarettes.

Ninety-Eight adults who smoke menthol cigarettes were examined to see the potential addition of combustible menthol alternatives compared with menthol cigarettes. The study was conducted over three weeks in four sessions, during which the participants first smoked their usual brand of menthol cigarettes. In the next three sessions, participants were randomly selected to smoke three menthol cigarette alternatives: a preassembled menthol roll-your-own cigarette using menthol pipe tobacco and a mentholated cigarette tube, a menthol filtered little cigar or a nonmenthol cigarette. During each session, the team measured how the individual smoked the product, the exhalation of carbon monoxide craving and withdrawal symptoms as well as participants' self-reported perceived drug effects and additional measures evaluating each product's addiction potential.

The Researchers found that while menthol filtered little cigars and nonmenthol cigarettes were appealing substitutes for menthol cigarettes, mentholated pipe tobacco and tubes in a roll-your-own cigarette were the most appealing and resulted in the highest number of indicators for future nicotine addiction. Researchers maintain these products aren't being considered for inclusion in the proposed ban, however the findings suggest that components of menthol roll-your-own products, including menthol rolling papers, cigarette tubes and pipe tobacco, should be included in the menthol cigarette and flavored cigar product standards. Their absence from this restriction will result in a critical loophole that is already being exploited by the tobacco industry and has the potential to lessen the potential public health benefits of the proposed menthol ban.

Previous research has determined menthol cigarette use is associated with increased smoking initiation, higher nicotine dependence and decreased adult cessation, particularly among vulnerable populations. The FDA proposed the rule banning menthol as a flavor in both cigarettes and cigars to address this public health issue. Following a review of public comments, a final ruling is expected in the coming months.

With the high prevalence of youth preferring mentholated products, it is imperative that all is done to protect youth from a lifetime addiction to this dangerous substance.

When you are ready to quit tobacco and beat a Nicotine Addiction the American Lung Association can help. You may visit their website at: www.americanlung.org. The Association says “the only thing that should go into your lungs is clean air, so if you’re inhaling anything, it could potentially be toxic to your lungs!!

The New York State Smokers’ Quitline assists thousands of New Yorkers every year in their attempts to break free from smoking and other tobacco and the service is free and confidential. Call 1-866-NYQUITS (1-866-697-8487) or visit them at: <https://www.nysmokefree.com/>.for Quit Help.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about tobacco use and vaping, seeking to educate and update the community regarding its negative consequences in collaboration with Carol Meschkow, Manager- Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [ww.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit the Vaping Facts and Myths Page of SAFE’s website to learn more about how vaping is detrimental to your health www.safeglencove.org.