Appeal of Cigars, Cigarillos, and Little Cigars to Youth

In recent years, the popularity of cigars, including cigarillos and little cigars (also known as brown cigarettes), has increased rapidly in the United States.\(^1\) Historically, cigars have been exempt from many of the regulations placed on cigarettes.\(^1\) As a result, tobacco companies have manufactured and marketed cigar products in ways that appeal to youth.\(^1\)

**Cigars vs. Cigarettes** \(^2\)

The key difference between cigars and cigarettes is that cigars contain tobacco wrapped in a tobacco leaf or other substance that contains tobacco. 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.
- **Little cigars/brown cigarettes** 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.

![Premium cigar](Premium_cigar.png)  ![Top: tipped cigarillo](Top_tipped_cigarillo.png)  ![Bottom: cigarillo without tip](Bottom_cigarillo_without_tip.png)  ![Top: cigarette](Top_cigarette.png)  ![Bottom: little cigar](Bottom_little_cigar.png)

**Cigar Use among Hoosier Youth** \(^3\)

- In 2016, 5.7% of Hoosier middle school students and 21.2% of Hoosier high school students had ever tried smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars.
- About 1.5% of middle school students and 8.7% of high school students were current (past 30 day) cigar users in 2016.
- Use of cigars was about as prevalent as use of cigarettes among Hoosier youth in 2016.
- Youth who use cigars commonly use other tobacco products as well. In 2016, nearly half of high school cigar users (48%) also smoked cigarettes.

**Trends in Cigar Use among Hoosier Youth** \(^3\)

Although use of cigars has declined significantly among Hoosier youth since 2000, cigar use has declined somewhat more slowly than use of cigarettes. While current use of cigarettes declined 72% among Hoosier high school students between 2000 and 2016, use of cigars declined only about 44%.

### Quick Facts

About 1 in 5 Hoosier high school students have ever tried cigars.

Cigar use is about as prevalent among Hoosier youth as cigarette use.

Cigars are often cheap and available in youth-appealing flavors.

About 65% of Hoosier high school cigar users smoke flavored cigars.

Cigar smoke contains the same toxic chemicals as cigarettes.\(^2,8\)

Regular cigar smoking increases the risk of:\(^2,8\)

- 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

Cigars contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.\(^6,8\)
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.\(^1\)

- Nationally, over 6 in 10 youth who use cigars report using flavored cigar products.\(^4\)
- In Indiana, about 65% of high school cigar users smoke flavored cigars.\(^3\)

Cigar Packaging\(^1\)

Cigars, especially flavored cigars, 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.

Price of Cigars

Because youth are more sensitive to tobacco prices than adults, they often choose cheaper tobacco products.\(^5\) Cigar prices are typically lower than cigarette prices, and these lower prices may make cigar products more appealing and accessible to youth than cigarettes.\(^1\)

Youth Access to Cigars

The majority of underage Hoosier high school students who use cigars report getting their cigars from social sources, such as having someone else buy cigars for them. A substantial proportion of youth, however, still report purchasing cigars for themselves. Among underage Indiana high school students in 2016, about 20% of current cigar users reported buying cigars themselves.\(^4\)

Concerns about Youth Cigar Use

Youth cigar use may be a gateway to addiction and regular tobacco use.

- Cigars contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.\(^6,8\)
- Youth cigar users commonly use cigars along with other tobacco products. In 2016, nearly half of Indiana high school cigar users (48%) also smoked cigarettes.\(^3\)

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.\(^6\)

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).\(^7,8\)

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\(^3\) Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey, 2016.

\(^4\) Corey CG et al. Flavored tobacco product use among middle and high school students - United States, 2014. MMWR 2015 64(38):1066-1070.


Updated 9/19/2017