

Youth Cigar Use

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Tobacco companies market cigar products in ways that appeal to youth.^{1,2} Cigars have similar use rates among youth as traditional cigarettes with U.S. middle and high school students (past 30-day use rates are between 1-2% of middle school and high school youth).^{3,4} Cigars are exempt from many of the federal 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 Indiana Youth in 2024:

- In 2024, 2.4% of Indiana middle school students and 3.3% of Indiana high school students had ever tried smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars.³
- In Indiana, 0.6% of middle school students and 0.5%* of high school students used cigars in the past 30 days. This was somewhat lower compared to the U.S. rates of 1.2% among middle school and 1.5% among high school students in 2024.^{3,4}
- Black high school youth in Indiana were more likely to have tried cigars (5.3%) than their white (1.6%) and Hispanic (2.7%) peers. 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.^{3,5}

*Estimate is unstable and should be interpreted with caution.

Fast Facts

- Cigars contain nicotine, which is **highly addictive**.
- Nearly **1 in 30** Hoosier high school students have ever tried cigars.
- Cigars are often cheap and available in youth-appealing flavors.
- Historically, Black or African American youth across the U.S. and in Indiana smoke cigars at higher rates compared to white and 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. This marketing tactic by the tobacco industry pushes dangerous products to youth and other vulnerable groups. In Indiana, about 75% of high school youth who use some kind of tobacco use flavored products including flavored cigars.³



Cigars can not only be flavored but also made to include marijuana, commonly known as a blunt. In 2024, approximately 1 in 20 high school students reported having tried in their lifetime a cigar with marijuana in it. More than 1 in 10 Black high school students have tried a cigar with marijuana in it, compared to 4.5% of white students and 7.1% of Hispanic students.³

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.^{1,2,7} In Indiana, 82% of retailers* that sold cigarillos sold them for less than \$1.⁶

Because youth are sensitive to tobacco prices, they often choose cheaper tobacco products.⁷ Cigar prices are typically lower than cigarette prices, and these lower prices may make cigar products more appealing and accessible to youth than cigarettes. 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.⁵



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.

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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 is dangerous

- Regular cigar smoking increases the risk of many diseases including cancer, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).⁸⁻¹⁰

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.

*Among retailers surveyed across 43 counties in Indiana