

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. Cigarettes²

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



Top: tipped cigarillo
Bottom: cigarillo without tip



Top: cigarette
Bottom: little cigar

Cigar Use among Hoosier Youth³

- 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.
- About 2.1% of middle school students and 6.7% of high school students were current (past 30 day) cigar users in 2018.
- Use of cigars was slightly higher than cigarette smoking among Hoosier youth in 2018.
- Youth who use cigars commonly use other tobacco products as well. In 2018, more than 4 in 10 high school cigar users (43%) also smoked cigarettes.

Trends in Cigar Use among Hoosier Youth³

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 84% among Hoosier high school students between 2000 and 2018, use of cigars declined only about 60%.

Quick Facts

Nearly 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 46% 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}



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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 In Indiana, about 46% of high school cigar users smoke flavored cigars.³

Cigar Packaging¹

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.⁴ 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 2018, about 19% of current cigar users reported buying cigars themselves.³

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 2018, nearly half of Indiana high school cigar users (43%) 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.⁵

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).^{6,7}

¹ Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids. Not your grandfather's cigar: a new generation of cheap and sweet cigars threatens a new generation of kids. 2013. Accessed 9/21/2015 from https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/content/what_we_do/industry_watch/cigar_report/2013CigarReport_Full.pdf.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Cigars. Accessed 10/21/2015 from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/cigars/.

³ Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey, 2018.

⁴ Chaloupka FJ, Liccario Pacula R. The impact of price on youth tobacco use. In *Smoking and Tobacco Control Monographs, monograph 14, chapter 12*. Retrieved from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/tcrb/monographs/14/m14_12.pdf.

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

⁶ National Cancer Institute. (2010). Cigar smoking and cancer. Accessed September 18, 2017 from <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cigars>

⁷ National Cancer Institute. Monograph 9: Cigars: Health Effects and Trends. February 1998. Accessed June 1, 2017 from <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brp/tcrb/monographs/>.

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