

# Tobacco Industry Manipulation of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products

For decades, the tobacco industry has tried to quiet the health concerns of its customers by marketing products that claim to be better for their health.

## History

As early as the 1930's and 1940's, tobacco companies were running ads claiming that, due to special filters, their cigarettes had "lower tar and nicotine levels" benefiting the smoker's health. Companies claimed that more doctors smoked their brand of cigarette; therefore, they were better for one's health.

All tobacco companies began selling cigarettes advertised as "light" or "mild." This strategy paid off regardless of the true health improvements. Tobacco companies were well aware that the implied claims were misleading or false.

## Compensating for "less nicotine"

As more smokers began consuming these "light" brands, they were using new ways to smoke in order to compensate for lower nicotine levels. Consumers began inhaling more deeply and blocking the filter vents that were to be "protecting" them from cigarette toxins. These practices not only nullified any health effects but created new health problems.

Studies have shown that "low-tar" cigarettes have higher nitrate concentrations, producing higher levels of tobacco specific nitrosamines (TSNAs), the deadliest of carcinogens found in cigarette smoke. Additional research has reported that "low-tar" cigarettes have not reduced smokers' overall risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or lung cancer.

## Product Attempts

In the 1990's, tobacco companies began marketing "natural" cigarettes or those without additives, implying they did not have the same health consequences as regular cigarettes. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission took action and began requiring explicit statements that the product was "not a safer cigarette," and that the product was still "dangerous to one's health."

Another product – a "smoke-free" cigarette smoking system – has been marketed to those concerned about secondhand smoke and smoke odor. Research has shown that smokers who used these products smoked four times the number of cigarettes to get the desired amount of nicotine.

Other cigarette alternatives using a redesigned filter, which has been marketed as "reducing carcinogenic compounds," "producing less inflammation in the respiratory system" and "lowering secondhand smoke amounts," have found glass fibers being discharged from the filter during use.

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission ~ [www.in.gov/isdh/tpc](http://www.in.gov/isdh/tpc) ~ 317.234.1787  
[www.QuitNowIndiana.com](http://www.QuitNowIndiana.com) ~ [www.indianaquitline.net](http://www.indianaquitline.net)

Tobacco processing technology that reduces the level of TSNAs, dangerous carcinogens in tobacco, has been used in a new way to cure tobacco. This lower TSNA-tobacco in combination with a charcoal-acetate filter is being test marketed in cigarettes. It has not been proven that reducing TSNA levels in tobacco leaves used in cigarettes reduces health risks associated with smoking. These types of cigarettes still contain a certain level of toxic substances. Although research indicates that activated charcoal filters can reduce the amounts of toxic gasses in mainstream tobacco smoke, there is currently no data linking the use of a charcoal filter with lowered cancer rates.

### **Indiana as a Guinea Pig for Products**

In November 2001, Brown & Williamson (B&W) used Indianapolis and surrounding central Indiana as a test market for Advance™. In Fall 2002, Ariva® (B&W) arrived in stores, followed by Quest® (Vector Tobacco) in January 2003, as Indiana was one of seven states testing this new line of products. Previous research shows that successful marketing of the tobacco companies foster smokers' misconceptions about the health risks of so-called "light" and "ultralight" cigarettes. Tobacco companies continue these deceptive marketing practices as they introduce new products continuing to appeal to the health concerns of smokers. In 2006, Indianapolis was once again targeted by the tobacco industry with Taboka, a new product from Philip Morris.

Beginning in July 2007, RJ Reynolds introduced Camel Snus in Central Indiana as one of seven cities to receive the product. Philip Morris followed in March 2008 by releasing Marlboro Snus into the Central Indiana market. Tourney Snus and Grant Prix Snus (Vector Tobacco) are also being marketed in Indianapolis and surrounding areas. Analysis of Indiana data indicates that 30% of adults in Central Indiana were aware of Snus products. Adults receiving direct mail from the tobacco companies are more likely to try Snus. Twenty percent of males in Central Indiana indicated that they already have tried Snus at least once.

RJ Reynolds introduced three variations of dissolvable tobacco products, all grouped under the "Camel Dissolvables" banner, in test markets including: Columbus, OH; Portland, OR; and Indianapolis, IN. The three products are smokeless, spit-free, made from finely milled tobacco and held together by food-grade binders. It is designed to be placed in the mouth, on the tongue, or between the cheek and gum where it dissolves to release tobacco. Orbs were introduced to Indianapolis retail markets in January 2009. Strips and Sticks were introduced in August 2009.

The introduction of smokeless tobacco products is of particular concern for employers who have invested in resources to help employees quit smoking. Snus and dissolvable tobacco products are being marketed as an alternative for smokers when they cannot smoke, thus potentially leading to "dual use."

### **Implications**

Ongoing research, including data from Indiana, illustrates the need for FDA authority to regulate all tobacco products. Now through the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009, the FDA has the authority to restrict cigarette and smokeless tobacco sales to youth, prohibit the use of reduced harm claims such as "low tar" or "light" cigarettes, and require bigger and bolder warning labels for cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

[Click here](#) for up-to-date information on the FDA's enforcement action.

**Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission** ~ [www.in.gov/isdh/tpc](http://www.in.gov/isdh/tpc) ~ 317.234.1787  
[www.QuitNowIndiana.com](http://www.QuitNowIndiana.com) ~ [www.indianaquitline.net](http://www.indianaquitline.net)