



MINNESOTA YOUTH + FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS

SUMN.org FACT SHEET

2019

Introduction

After years of declining tobacco use, the introduction of e-cigarettes brought about an increase in young people using tobacco products across the country. (The FDA defines all e-cigarettes, e-liquids, and associated nicotine delivery system components as “tobacco products,” along with traditional products like cigarettes and cigars.) Most e-cigarettes use flavored liquids, making them especially enticing to young people. While flavors other than menthol have been banned for use in cigarettes to limit their appeal to children, flavorings are legal for other forms of tobacco products; in fact, flavored tobacco products are advertised with labels and packaging similar to that of candy and other foods marketed toward children, appealing to youth while downplaying health risks.

For more information on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, consequences, contributing factors, and treatment, as well as mental health data, visit SUMN.org

The number of available e-liquid flavors in the U.S. doubled between 2014 and 2017, to more than 15,000.¹ Due to their popularity, other forms of tobacco (such as cigars and cigarillos) are also seeing an increase in flavored products.

Overall, sales of flavored products have increased in Minnesota, mainly due to non-menthol flavored e-cigarettes. Minnesota’s sales of flavored cigars, cigarillos, and smokeless tobacco stayed relatively stable between 2011 and 2016.² However, other flavors (like fruit, spice, and chocolate) more than doubled between 2012 and 2016, to 25.7% of total sales.³

The increase in flavored tobacco products appealing to youth is especially concerning because young brains are particularly susceptible to the harmful effects of nicotine, including dependence. In fact, 95% of current smokers began using tobacco products before the age of 21.⁴

Tobacco Product Use by Minnesota Students

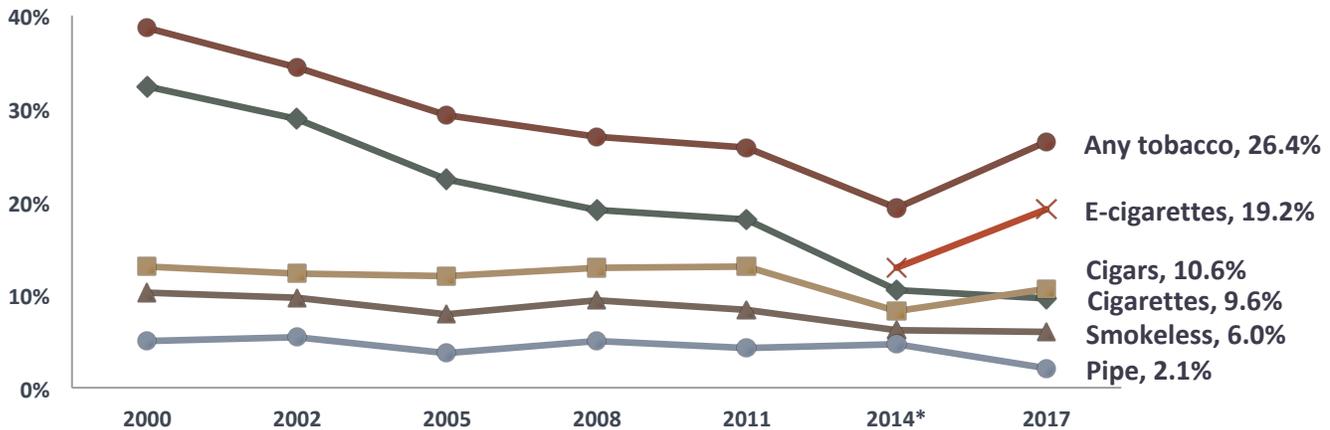
Both the Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey and the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) show a recent increase in use of tobacco products. According to the MYTS, overall tobacco use increased for the first time in 2017, after the survey added a question about e-cigarette use in 2014 (previous surveys asked about cigarettes, cigars or cigarillos, pipes, and smokeless tobacco).

The MSS showed a similar trend: tobacco product use among 9th graders dropped from 29.0% in 2001 to 10.3% in 2013. However, overall use rose for the first time in 2016, to 11.3%, after the survey added questions about e-cigarette and hookah use.



On the left is a box of apple juice; on the right is flavored nicotine-containing e-liquid.

E-cigarettes Are Driving an Increase in Tobacco Product Use Grades 9-12, 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey

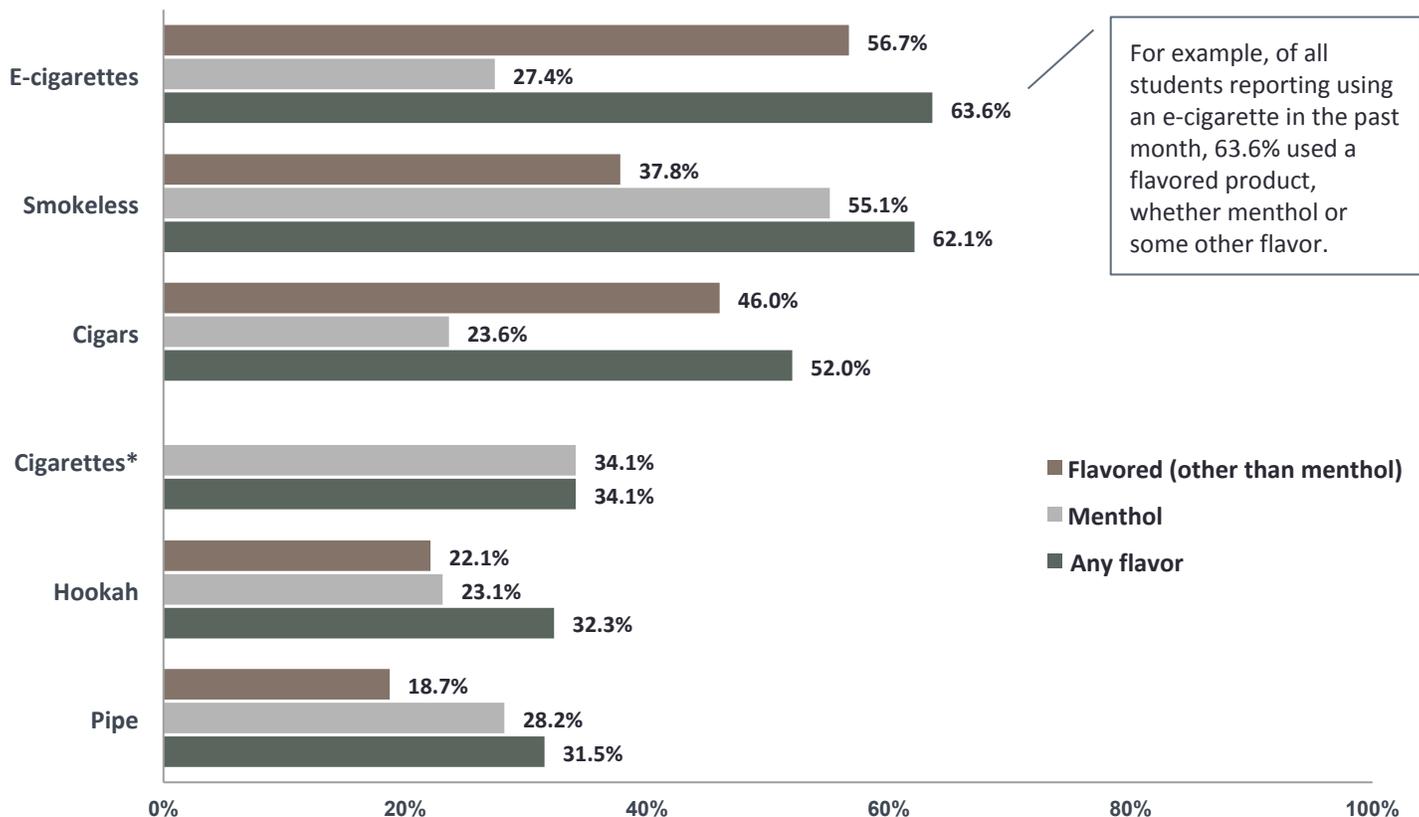


* E-cigarettes added to survey in 2014.

Flavorings and Current Tobacco Use

Of students who have used tobacco products in the past 30 days, 66.4% reported using a flavored product, according to the MYTS. Those using e-cigarettes were the most likely to have used a flavored product, at 63.6% (with 27.4% reporting using menthol flavoring, and 56.7% using another type of flavor, such as fruit or candy).

Flavored Tobacco and E-cigarettes are Popular with Students Grades 6-12, 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey

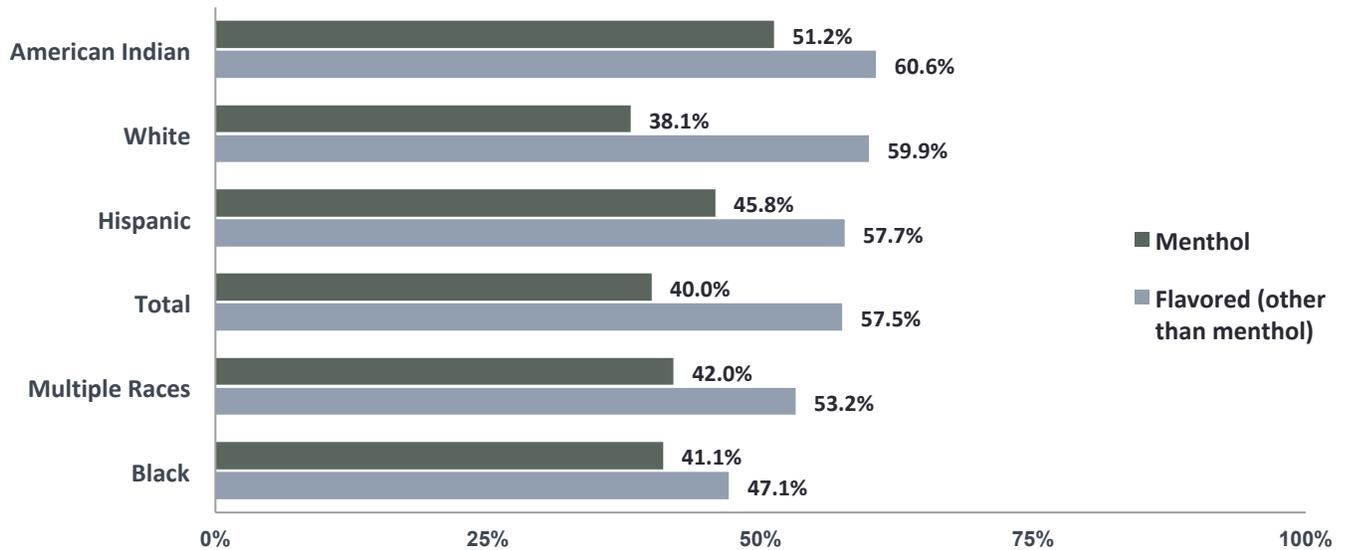


* Cigarettes are not available in non-menthol flavors.

Disparities in Use of Flavored Products

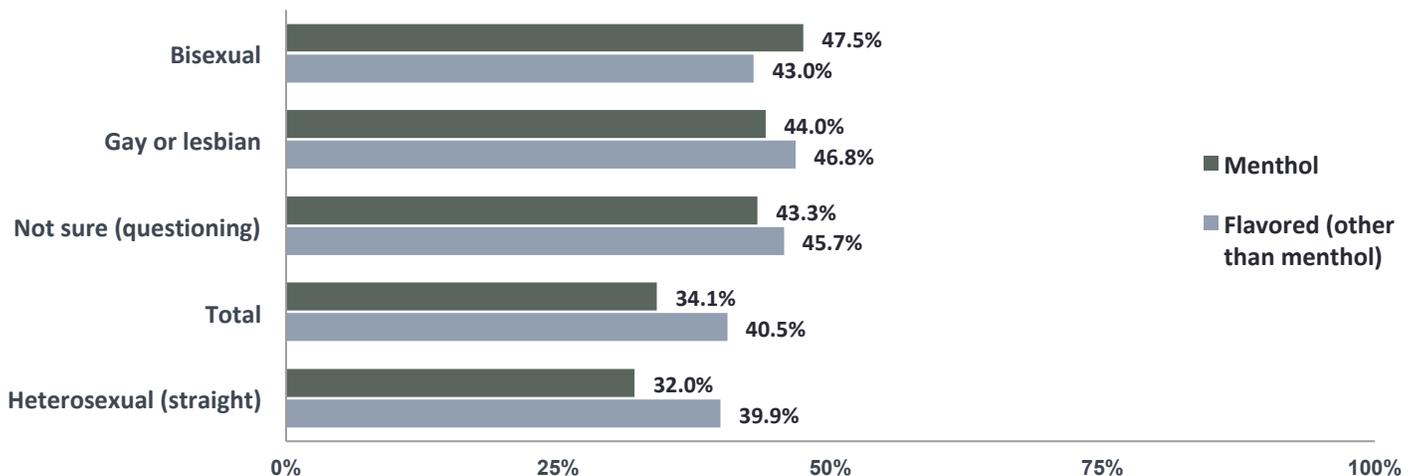
Traditionally, there have been wide disparities in menthol use, especially among African-Americans and LGBTQ people. According to the MYTS, among those students reporting any past-month use of tobacco products, black students are slightly more likely than the average to use menthol flavoring; however, they are less likely to use other flavors. American Indian students are the most likely to report use of both menthol and other flavorings.

Past-Month Tobacco Users Who've Used Flavored Products, by Race/Ethnicity
 Grades 6-12, 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey

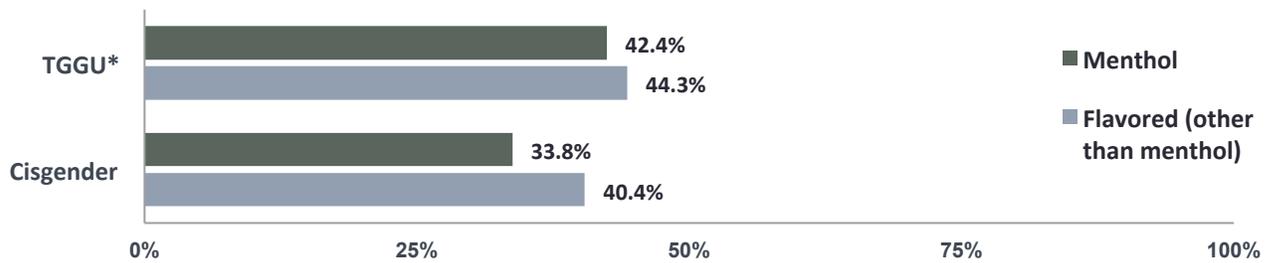


Data from the MSS do show strong disparities between LGBTQ students and their heterosexual peers: bisexual students were most likely to use menthol tobacco products, while gay and lesbian students were most likely to report using other flavorings. Transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or students unsure of their gender identity (TGGU) were also more likely to have reported using both flavored and menthol products in the past month, compared to their cisgender peers.

Past-Month Tobacco Users Who've Used Flavored Products, by Sexual Orientation
 Grades 9 and 11, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey



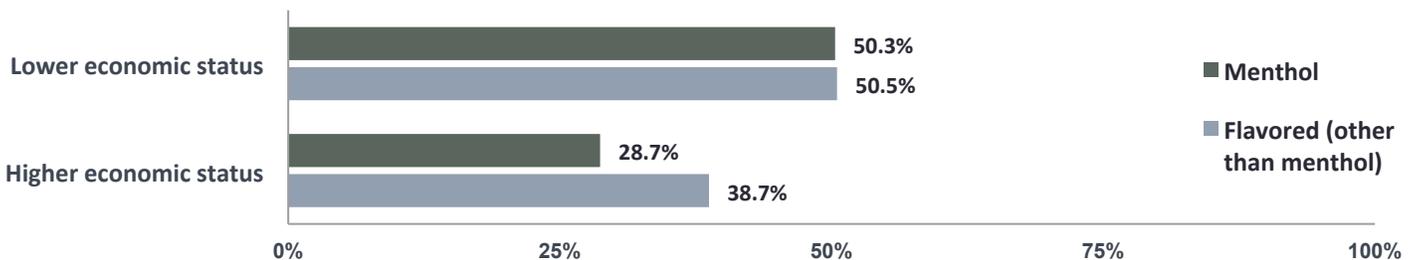
Past-Month Tobacco Users Who've Used Flavored Products, by Gender Identity Grades 9 and 11, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey



* Transgender, genderqueer, genderfluid, or unsure about their gender

Students in economically-inescure situations are also more likely to use menthol and other flavorings. The MSS asks students whether they receive free or reduced-price lunch, whether they've experienced homelessness in the past year, and whether they've had to skip meals because their families didn't have enough money. Students with 2 or 3 of these indicators (lower economic status) were much more likely to report use of flavorings than students with none (higher economic status).

Past-Month Tobacco Users Who've Used Flavored Products, by Economic Status Grades 9 and 11, 2016 Minnesota Student Survey

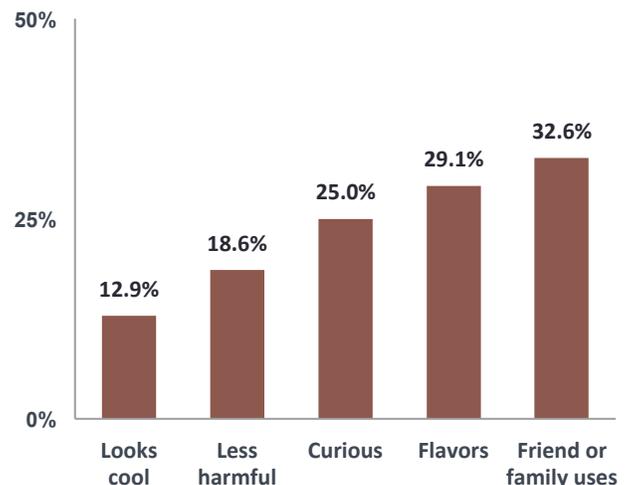


Reasons for Use of E-cigarettes

According to the MYTS, among the reasons suggested for using e-cigarettes by current (past-month) users, use by a friend or family member was cited most often, at 32.6%. However, flavorings came in at a close second place, at 29.1%.

The fourth most-common reason for use was the belief that e-cigarettes are less harmful than traditional tobacco products. The percentage of students who believe that e-cigarettes are less harmful doubles between middle school and high school: 15% of those in grades 6-8 hold this belief, while 28% of those in grades 9-12 do so. E-cigarette producers intentionally use flavorings to perpetuate this belief: comparisons to fruit and candy create the impression that e-cigarettes are less dangerous than traditional cigarettes.

Top 5 Reasons for Use Among Students Who Have Ever Tried an E-cigarette Grades 6-12, 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey



Additionally, flavorings may make it more difficult to quit using tobacco products: while 36.6% of students currently using unflavored products have tried to quit at least once in the past year, 63.4% of those using flavored products (other than menthol) have tried to quit. Failed attempts to quit are not related to use of menthol products. However, those who use menthol are more likely to be frequent e-cigarette users (20 or more days a month), at 21.8%, vs. 13.3% for non-menthol users.

The Way Ahead

In response to increased use of tobacco products by young people, more than 20 local governments around Minnesota have instituted policies raising the tobacco age to 21, as of early 2019. The state is considering a similar bill. Minnesota is also advancing a statewide expansion of the clean indoor air act to include e-cigarettes. These policies will help ensure that young people have the opportunity to grow up nicotine-free.

For more information on The Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey and tobacco use in Minnesota, please visit the Minnesota Department of Health's Tobacco NUMBRS page:
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/data/index.html>

For more on tobacco policy and legislation, as well as information on prevention and cessation, visit ClearWay Minnesota at <http://clearwaymn.org/>

1. Hsu, Greta, Jessica Y. Sun, and Shu-Hong Zhu. "Evolution of electronic cigarette brands from 2013-2014 to 2016-2017: analysis of brand websites." *Journal of medical Internet research* 20.3 (2018).
2. Kuiper, Nicole M., et al. "Trends in sales of flavored and menthol tobacco products in the United States during 2011–2015." *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* 20.6 (2017): 698-706.
3. Kuiper, Nicole M., et al. "Peer Reviewed: Trends in Unit Sales of Flavored and Menthol Electronic Cigarettes in the United States, 2012–2016." *Preventing chronic disease* 15 (2018).
4. Kwan, Leslie Y., Kathleen Stratton, and Richard J. Bonnie, eds. *Public health implications of raising the minimum age of legal access to tobacco products*. National Academies Press, 2015.
<https://tobacco21.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Public-Health-Implications-of-Raising-the-Minimum-Age-of-Legal-Access-to-Tobacco-Products-Institute-of-Medicine.pdf>

State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Minnesota's SEOW has been monitoring substance abuse trends since 2007. The Workgroup helps guide prevention planning at the state level, and provides training and technical assistance to communities. In, 2008 the SEOW launched the Substance Use in Minnesota (SUMN) website to ensure quick and easy access to data for prevention professionals.

SUMN.org

SUMN is a one-stop-shop for data, tools, and prevention resources. Visitors can search county, regional, and state level data by topic, by location, and by demographic producing tables, charts, graphs, and maps. View and download data products, such as this fact sheet, and find tips on finding, analyzing, translating, using, and disseminating data.

Contact Us

For questions or more information regarding the State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup or SUMN.org, please email: info@sumn.org

To contact the Regional Prevention Coordinator for your region, please visit: www.rpcmnmn.org

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