

### High Rates of Youth Using Flavoured Tobacco

New data released recently from the National Youth Smoking Survey show that a very high number of high school students are using flavoured tobacco products.

Fruit and candy flavoured tobacco, are helping to attract and addict a new generation of youth by making it easier for them to become addicted to tobacco. According to the survey, more than half of high school students in Canada who have used tobacco products in the past 30 days have used flavoured tobacco. Through Bill C-32, the Federal Tobacco Act prohibits flavours (except menthol) in cigarettes, cigarillos and blunt wraps. "There is a glaring loophole that allows tobacco industries to sidestep regulation," notes David Patterson, Youth Engagement Advisor at the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. "Cigarillos are defined as cigars weighing 1.4 grams or less featuring a cigarette filter. Many tobacco companies have avoided this definition by increasing the weight to more than 1.4 grams, removing the filter, or both, which allows them to continue to promote and sell flavoured products." Provincially, these requirements have been adopted in the Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA).

The Youth Smoking Survey also showed that almost a third of youth smokers had smoked menthol cigarettes in the previous 30 days, totalling 75,000 students. This new information about the high popularity of menthol cigarettes among youth contrasts with a low level of popularity among adults, with menthol cigarettes representing only 4% of all cigarettes sold to adults in Canada.

"I don't think the tobacco industry is targeting adults when making grape flavoured cigars or apple flavoured chew. Their purpose is to get the attention of youth to encourage them to become addicted," says Nikole Meth, a local high-school student. "Even the packaging appeals to youth. The bright colours and candy themes make the product look more like candy or gum, not a harmful, addictive drug."

The Health Unit will be engaging area youth in educational activities involving flavours and tobacco this Halloween, including the circulation of a federal petition to ban flavours from tobacco products, effectively closing the loophole in Bill C-32.

You can get more information on the survey results or the dangers of flavoured tobacco products by reading the full article: (Manske, S.R., Rynard, V., Minaker, L., "Flavoured Tobacco Use among Canadian Youth: Evidence from Canada's 2010/2011 Youth Smoking Survey." October 2013. Waterloo: Propel Centre for Population Health Impact, 1-2. [www.yss.uwaterloo.ca/index.cfm?section=5&page=288](http://www.yss.uwaterloo.ca/index.cfm?section=5&page=288) )

Or contact the Health Unit: Call 1-800-660-5853, visit [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org) or like our facebook page to get important public health updates.

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