

MENTHOL FACTS

Menthol is a minty flavor that makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.

- Most African American smokers smoke menthols (85%).
- Most minorities who are smokers smoke menthols.
- Most kids who start smoking try menthols first.
- Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.

The menthol issue is a social justice issue.

- The tobacco industry intentionally tries to get African Americans to buy mentholated tobacco products offering discounts, and placing more (and larger) advertisements for menthols in Black communities.
- The tobacco industry pays many Black political leaders, and sponsors HBCUs, festivals, Black-owned newspapers and other prominent civil rights organizations.
- Improving health outcomes for African Americans will require leaders to tear down the racial and social systems that have kept the tobacco industry in charge.

The FDA has the power to ban menthol from tobacco products, and on April 29, 2021, committed to issuing a new standard that would ban menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes and cigars.

- A menthol ban on cigarettes would help reduce addiction and youth experimentation.
- A menthol ban will lead smokers to quit and improve quit attempts.
- A menthol ban will help address tobacco-related health disparities.

The tobacco industry pays Black leaders to say that a ban on menthol would criminalize African Americans, but this is not true.

- A menthol ban would prohibit people from manufacturing, distributing and selling menthols, NOT possessing them.