

BE IN THE KNOW: MENTHOL CIGARETTES

Why is the chemical menthol added to cigarettes?

Menthol is added to give a “minty” cool taste to some brands of cigarettes.



Adding menthol to cigarettes may make them more addictive, more harmful, or more attractive to teens.^{1,5} The added menthol may make it easier for a smoker to inhale more deeply, which allows more chemicals to enter the body.²

Do some groups smoke menthol products more than others? And does that cause harm?



According to the US Centers for Disease Control, about 20% of cigarettes sold in the US in 2006 were menthol.⁸ African Americans are the most likely group to smoke menthol. In 2004—2008 83% of African American smokers said they use menthol.⁸ African Americans also have more smoking

related illnesses.

In NC, 64% of all high school smokers use menthol (or 62% of white teen smokers and 71% of black teen smokers).⁹ Some scientists believe that menthol cigarettes may contribute to increased smoking-related diseases among African-Americans. Data also suggest menthol makes it harder to quit smoking.^{3,4,5}

Whether using menthol or regular cigarettes, smoking is very bad for you. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemical and at least 70 of them are known to cause cancer.⁷

If you or a loved one smokes [or use smokeless tobacco] call QuitlineNC at **1-800-784-8669** or visit QuitlineNC.com. QuitlineNC offers free, private coaching over the phone or online to help you or your loved one to stop using tobacco.



Sources:

¹Henningfield and Djordjevic “Menthol cigarettes: Research needs and challenges” *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* Volume 6, Supplement 1 (February 2004) S11–S16

²Hymowitz, N.; Mouton, C.; and Edkholdt, H. Menthol cigarette smoking in African Americans and Whites. *Tobacco Control* 4 (2):194-195, 1995.

³J.M. Kreslake, G. F. Wayne, H. R. Alpert, H. K. Koh, and G. N. Connolly “Tobacco Industry Control of Menthol in Cigarettes and Targeting of Adolescents and Young Adults” *Am J Public Health*, September 1, 2008; 98(9): 1685 - 1692.

⁴Letcher, Hulley, Huston, et al. “Menthol Cigarettes, Smoking Cessation, Atherosclerosis, and Pulmonary Function” *Arch Intern Med*. 2006;166:1915-1922.

⁵Muscat, Richie and Stellman, “Mentholated Cigarettes and Smoking Habits in Whites and Blacks” *Tobacco Control* 2002; 11: 368-371.

⁶T L Richardson “African-American smokers and cancers of the lung and of the upper respiratory and digestive tracts. Is menthol part of the puzzle?” *West J Med*. 1997 March; 166(3): 189–194.

⁷ US Surgeon General’s Report: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease. www.cdc.gov/tobacco

⁸ Tobacco Brand Preferences, CDC Office on Smoking and Health, www.cdc.gov/tobacco

⁹ NC Youth tobacco Survey 2009. www.tobaccocontrolandprevention.ncdhs.gov

About the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch (TPC)

The North Carolina Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch works to improve the health of North Carolina residents by promoting smoke-free environments and tobacco-free lifestyles. Our goal is to build capacity of diverse organizations and communities to carry out effective, culturally appropriate strategies to reduce deaths and health problems due to tobacco use and secondhand smoke.



About TRU:

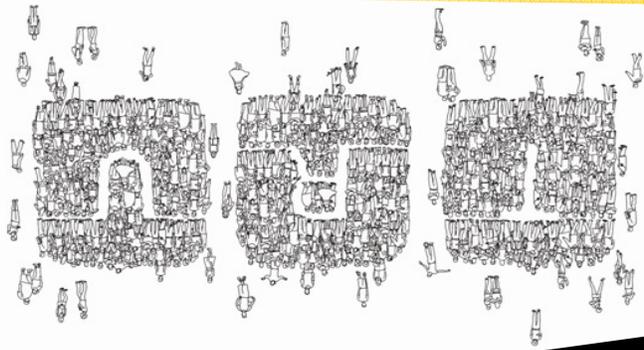
TRU is North Carolina’s youth-led grassroots movement that has helped bring our state’s teen smoking rates to the lowest on record. TRU stands for Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered. Our name says a lot about us. We bring home the reality of tobacco use and are on our way to creating the state’s first tobacco-free generation. The TRU movement rallies teens to take a stand against tobacco use and get the message out with activities like working with the media, encouraging local businesses to go tobacco-free or holding “cigarette butts pick-up” events.

To find out more about TRU, please visit: www.realityunfiltered.com

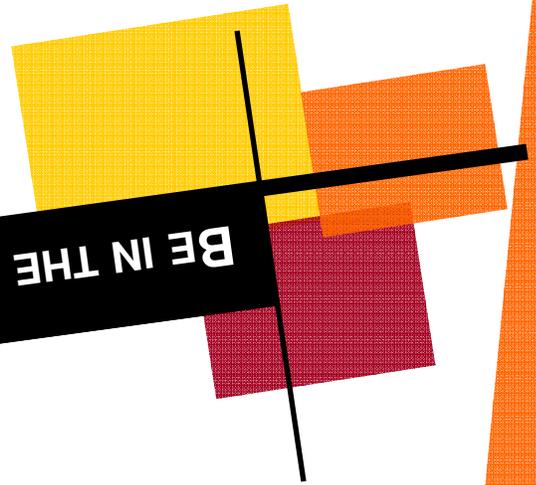


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TRU IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE. For more information contact me to learn more:



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Join the movement

**WE ARE A
FORCE OF
TOBACCO-FREE
GOODNESS**



WHAT WILL YOU DO AS A TRU TEEN?



It's official: teen smoking is now at an all-time low. Across the state, teens are making sweeping changes. And you can help. As a TRU teen you will:

- Encourage others to become tobacco-free,
- Educate your peers,
- Speak to community leaders and decision makers,
- Meet with other teens in your region and across the state, and
- Develop fun, creative activities.

Meet New People

Build Your Resume

Express Yourself

Show Your Care



TRU is making a difference. Contact me to learn more:
CONTACT INFORMATION:
INSERT COORDINATOR NAME
INSERT AGENCY NAME and ADDRESS
INSERT PHONE NUMBER
INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS

