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FACT SHEET Cigar Use among Maryland Youth

Smoking cigars is just as dangerous as smoking cigarettes. Cigars cause heart disease and cancer and contain nicotine, cyanide, and arsenic. Because cigars contain more tobacco than cigarettes and burn longer, they give off greater amounts of harmful secondhand smoke. This fact sheet provides data on the use of cigars among youth in Maryland.

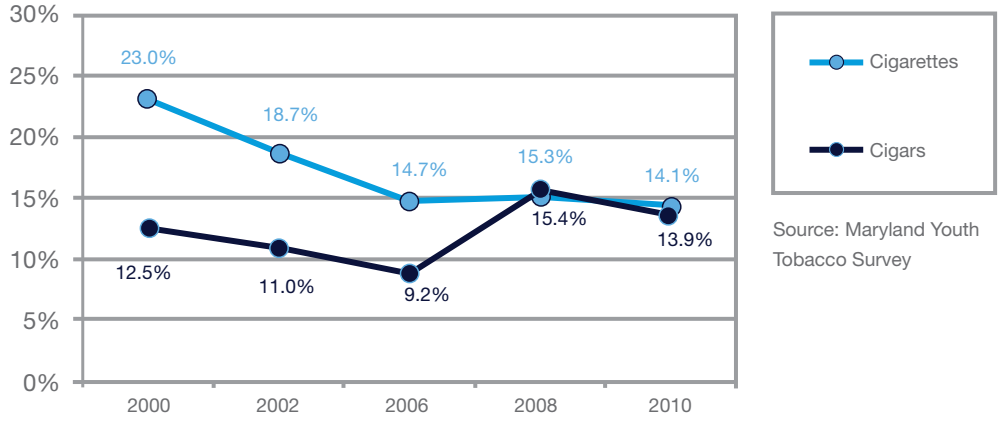
As Maryland youth smoke fewer cigarettes, they are smoking more cigars.

- According to the Maryland Youth Tobacco Survey, cigarette smoking has *decreased* among high school students by nearly 40 percent since 2000. But cigar use has *increased* by more than 11 percent during the same time period.
- In 2000, 57 percent of underage high school students who used tobacco reported using a tobacco product other than cigarettes. By 2010, this number had grown to 79 percent, with nearly three-quarters of these youth smoking cigars.
- According to the Maryland Comptroller's office, FY 2001 to FY 2011, the total number of cigarette packs sold in Maryland *declined* by approximately 33.6 percent. Over the same time period, sales of cigar products *increased* by more than 176 percent.

About as many Maryland youth smoke cigars as smoke cigarettes.

- A decade ago, far more underage high school students reported cigarette smoking than cigar smoking in the previous 30 days. By 2010, approximately the same percentage of Maryland youth reported smoking cigars as cigarettes.

Percent of High School Students < 18 Years Smoking Cigarettes and Cigars in Last 30 Days



Source: Maryland Youth Tobacco Survey

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They're cheap, often sold one at

Flavored cigars are driving youth cigar use.

- In 2010, nearly 80 percent of underage high school cigar smokers reported smoking flavored cigars.
- In contrast, the most recent Maryland Adult Tobacco Survey (2008) found that only 4 percent of adults smoke cigars, and less than 2 percent of adults reported current flavored cigar use.
- The most popular types of flavored cigars are small cigars, or cigarillos. These are sold singly in such fruit and candy flavors as grape, vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, peach, and wine.

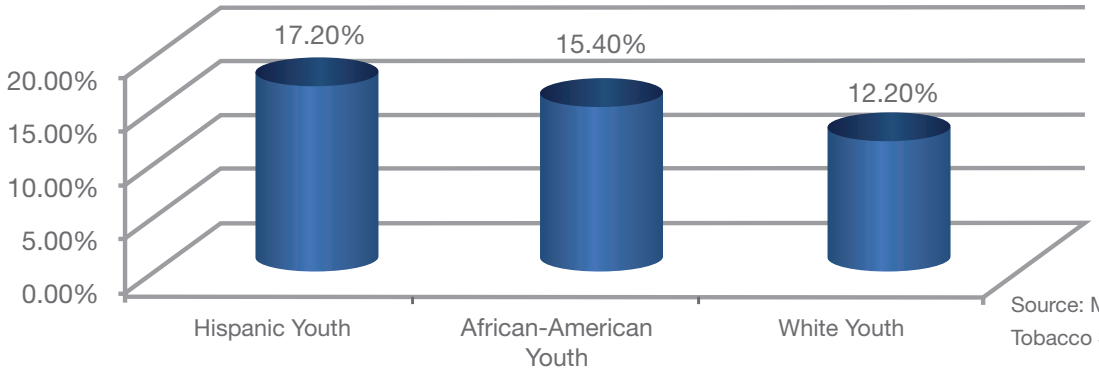
Small cigars can be a gateway to lifelong tobacco use.

- Attractive flavors mask the harsh taste of the toxins and tobacco and make initiation and addiction easier for youth.
- Small cigars are often sold one at a time for under $0.70 – less than the price of a candy bar or an ice cream cone, and far less than a pack of cigarettes. Youth are known to be especially price sensitive, and are able to purchase these products with pocket change. Single cigars are also easier to hide from parents than a pack of cigarettes.

There may be racial and ethnic disparities in the use of cigars.

- Data from the Maryland Youth Tobacco Survey suggest that Hispanic youth may smoke cigars at the highest rates, followed by African American, then white youth.

Cigar Smoking among Maryland High School Students in 2010 by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Maryland Youth Tobacco Survey

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