



# Menthol Cigarettes

## WHY IS THE CHEMICAL MENTHOL ADDED TO CIGARETTES?

Menthol is added to give a “minty” cool taste to some brands of cigarettes. Because cough drops and medications contain menthol flavoring, this “minty” taste can make some smokers think that menthol cigarettes are healthier than regular cigarettes.

The truth is that adding menthol to cigarettes does not make them healthy! In fact, menthol may even make things worse.<sup>1,5</sup> The added menthol may make it easier for a smoker to inhale more deeply, which allows more chemicals to enter the body.<sup>2</sup>

## DO SOME GROUPS SMOKE MENTHOL PRODUCTS MORE THAN OTHERS?

Some cigarette manufacturers have marketed menthol products to African Americans by promoting festivals, concerts or taking out ads in popular magazines. African Americans are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than others (about 70% vs. 30%), and African Americans have more smoking related illnesses.

Some scientists believe that menthol cigarettes may contribute to the differences in health and make it harder to quit.<sup>3</sup> Whether menthol or regular cigarettes, smoking is very bad for you. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals. At least 250 of the chemicals are harmful to human health including 50 that are known to cause cancer.

## THE BOTTOM LINE: CHOOSE NOT TO SMOKE.

*If you or someone you know wants to quit smoking or dipping, please call:*



1-800-QUIT-NOW

References:<sup>1</sup>NC Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, Cigarette Price Survey, 2009. <sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses—United States, 1995–1999. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report [serial online]. 2002;51(14):300–303 [accessed 2009 Mar 31]. <sup>3</sup>“The Toll of Tobacco in North Carolina” Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Downloaded on October 27, 2008 at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/settlements/toll.php?StateID=NC>

### ABOUT THE NORTH CAROLINA HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND (HWTF)

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund was created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of the state’s share of the national tobacco settlement to improve the health of all North Carolinians by funding preventive health initiatives. Please visit: [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com)

### ABOUT TOBACCO-FREE COLLEGES

*Tobacco-Free Colleges is the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund’s program that provides assistance to all NC campuses in adopting and implementing tobacco-free policies and in promoting cessation. Please visit: [www.tobaccofreecollegesnc.com](http://www.tobaccofreecollegesnc.com).*