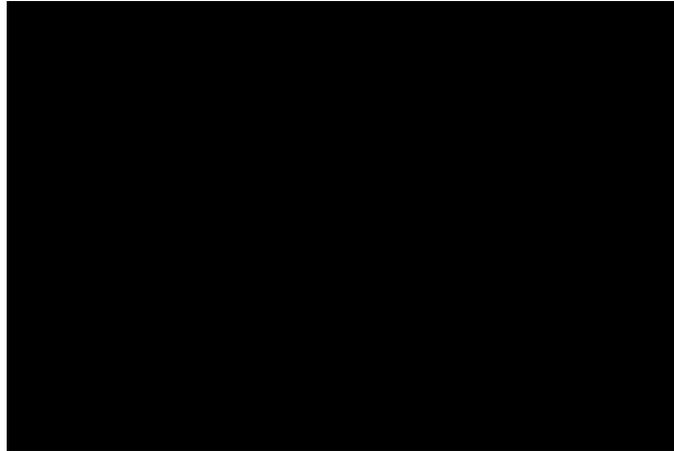




 **READY FOR LIFE**



The Impact of Tobacco



Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. Nearly 40 million U.S. adults still smoke cigarettes, and about 4.7 million middle and high school students use at least one tobacco product, including e-cigarettes. Every day, about 1,600 U.S. youth younger than 18 years smoke their first cigarette. Each year, nearly half a million Americans die prematurely of smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke. Another 16 million live with a severe illness caused by smoking. Each year, the United States spends nearly \$170 billion on medical care to treat smoking-related diseases in adults.

Statistics reveal the staggering impact of the African American Community



Although African Americans usually smoke fewer cigarettes and start smoking cigarettes at an older age, they are more likely to die from smoking-related diseases than Whites. Nevertheless, African American children and adults are more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke than any other racial or ethnic group.

Tobacco use is a significant contributor to the three leading causes of death among African Americans—heart disease, cancer, and stroke.

Here is some data that lends to the impact of cigarettes on the African American Community.

During 2013-2014, secondhand smoke exposure was found in:

66.1% of African American children aged 3–11 years.¹¹

55.3% of African American adolescents aged 12–19 years.¹¹

45.5% of African American adults age 20 years and older.¹¹

African American nonsmokers generally have higher cotinine levels (an indicator of recent exposure to tobacco smoke) than nonsmokers of other races/ethnicities.¹¹



Figure 1: Newport Cigarette Ads

The tobacco industry has a long history of going to great lengths to target the African-American community. Decades of research and the tobacco industry's internal documents affirm that the industry employs multiple campaigns and strategies to target and reach African Americans aggressively. Since the 1950s, the tobacco industry has targeted African Americans with marketing for menthol cigarettes through sponsorship of community and music events, targeted magazine advertising, and youthful imagery, price discounting, and marketing in the retail environment. This aggressive targeted marketing has paid off. African-American smokers, both adults, and youth, now overwhelmingly prefer menthol cigarettes. Overall, 85 percent of African-American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes. ² This preference for menthol cigarettes is the direct result of a decades-long marketing campaign by the tobacco industry.



The Targeting of Communities

Tobacco companies have taken advantage of the greater density of convenience stores and gas stations in lower-income and minority neighborhoods to market and promote tobacco products heavily. Their marketing strategies have included price discounts, promotional giveaways, heavy product placement, and culturally tailored ad content at retail locations, both indoors and out.

A wealth of research indicates that African American neighborhoods have a disproportionate number of tobacco retailers, pervasive tobacco marketing, and more marketing of menthol products.²³ In addition to being heavily advertised and widely available, certain tobacco products are priced lower in African American communities, making them more appealing, particularly to price-sensitive youth:

- A 2017 nationwide study found that stores in neighborhoods with the highest proportion of African Americans have more than double the odds of advertising price promotions for tobacco products than stores in communities with the lowest proportion of African Americans.
- A 2011 study of cigarette prices in retail stores across the U.S. found that Newport cigarettes are significantly less expensive in neighborhoods with higher proportions of African Americans.

No Menthol Sunday



No Menthol Sunday, a national observance day led by The Center for Black Health & Equity, is a significant opportunity to engage faith leaders and their communities in discussing how to improve health outcomes for African Americans. Tobacco is still the number one killer of African Americans, and people of faith can play a significant role in changing this. This day, to encourage congregations and communities to support one another in escaping tobacco addiction and aims to highlight the role of menthol and flavors in particular.

After a 10-year fight, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act in 2020. A key win, which eliminated the sale of most flavored tobacco products, including mint and menthol! But now, a total ban on menthol is in the hands of the Food & Drug Administration. FDA.

Progress is essential, but the journey is not yet over. 85% of African American smokers choose menthols. Yet, a ban has not been instituted.

The FDA has been issued a court order to respond to a petition for a menthol ban. You can join the fight by asking your local representatives to support a ban on menthol.

To find out more or support, No Menthol Sunday, please visit the links below for more information.

[HOME | NMS 2021 \(nomentholsunday.org\)](https://nomentholsunday.org)

[0400.pdf \(tobaccofreekids.org\)](https://tobaccofreekids.org)

[tclc-guide-reg-menthol-tips-tools-2018.pdf \(publichealthlawcenter.org\)](https://publichealthlawcenter.org)

[tclc-guide-reg-menthol-tips-tools-2018.pdf \(publichealthlawcenter.org\)](https://publichealthlawcenter.org)

[Why tobacco is a racial justice issue \(truthinitiative.org\)](https://truthinitiative.org)