

Learn To Live healthnotes

News from the Anne Arundel County Department of Health

Issue 23

Flavored Cigarettes Banned

In 2009, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned fruit and candy flavored cigarettes to help reduce the number of kids who start smoking.

According to the FDA, flavors make cigarettes and other tobacco products more tempting to youth, even though it is illegal for them to buy or possess tobacco. Studies have shown that 17-year-old smokers are three times more likely to use flavored cigarettes than smokers over the age of 25. Menthol cigarettes or other flavored tobacco products, such as small cigars and chewing tobacco, are not affected by the ban.

Flavored cigarettes were banned, in part, because users think they are safer than regular tobacco products. All tobacco products contain nicotine, the addictive drug that makes it hard to quit smoking.

Flavored tobacco carries the same health risks as regular tobacco. Smoking any kind of tobacco increases the risk of developing serious health problems, including lung cancer, heart disease and emphysema. Tobacco products that aren't smoked – such as snuff and chewing tobacco – can also cause gum disease and mouth cancer.

For more about flavored tobacco products, go to the FDA website at www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts.

E-Cigarettes: A Safe Smoke?

Since being introduced into the U.S. a few years ago, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) have been marketed as a safe alternative to cigarettes and as a way to quit smoking. Sold online and in stores, they do not contain tobacco and are not covered by tobacco laws and regulations. Since they are not tobacco products, minors can buy them.

E-cigarettes deliver nicotine or other substances in the form of a vapor. They usually consist of a battery-operated heating element and a replaceable cartridge that contains nicotine or other chemicals. When heated, the contents of the cartridge become a vapor, which the user inhales.

New Dietary Guidelines Fight Obesity

The federal government has released the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which place a new emphasis on reducing calorie consumption and increasing physical activity. The guidelines are in response to the nation's obesity crisis: about one-third of children and two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese.

Recommendations for healthy eating include:

- ◆ Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- ◆ Avoid oversized portions.
- ◆ Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.
- ◆ Compare prepared foods and choose those with low sodium (salt).
- ◆ Drink water instead of sugar drinks.



The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are available at www.dietaryguidelines.gov.

▶ Get nutrition tips and recipes in a free Healthy Eating Kit from the Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979, or www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org (click on "Food and Fitness").

The FDA and major health organizations have opposed e-cigarettes. The devices contain nicotine, the addictive drug found in tobacco. Preliminary tests have shown that some also contain toxic chemicals, some of which may cause cancer. For more on e-cigarettes, go to the FDA website at www.fda.gov and type "e-cigarettes" in the search box.

▶ Kick the smoking habit now with a free Quit-Smoking Kit from the Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979, or www.MyQuitKit.org.

Learn To Live

Anne Arundel County Department of Health
www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org

Tanning Beds: A Cancer Risk



Many people know that overexposure to the sun can lead to skin cancer. While playing sports or spending a day at the beach, too much ultraviolet (UV) light can damage your skin and cause cancer. In fact, the rates of melanoma (the most

dangerous form of skin cancer) diagnosis and death are 40 percent higher in Anne Arundel County than for Maryland as a whole.

It is less well known that these cancer rates may be linked to the use of tanning beds. The beds emit the same UV light as the sun, so the health risks of using tanning beds are similar to tanning in the sun. Women are more likely to use tanning beds than men, and among women in Anne Arundel County, death rates from melanoma are rising.

There is a special risk for young people. There is evidence of a 75 percent increase in risk for melanoma for those who first used tanning beds in their teens or twenties. About 8.7 percent of teens report using tanning beds, but girls are seven times more likely to use them than boys.

Maryland law restricts the use of tanning devices by minors. No one under 18 may tan without written consent from a parent or legal guardian, and tanning facilities must keep a record of minor customers. Fines for violating the law can reach \$1,000. Learn more about indoor tanning at www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org.



Protect yourself and your family from skin cancer year-round with a free Sun Smart Kit from the Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979, or order online at www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org (click on "Free Materials").

The Learn To Live Program of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health

Learn To Live offers Anne Arundel County residents information on many free services and educational materials to help them live healthier lives. Some information is also available in Spanish and Korean.

Food and Fitness

- Healthy Eating Kit
- Healthy recipes

Stopping Tobacco Use

- Quit-smoking classes
- Quit-Smoking Kit
- www.iQuitKit.org for teen smokers
- Don't Let Us Get Hooked on Tobacco parent guide
- Tobacco-Free Kids Week
- Tobacco Sales Compliance Kit for merchants

Preventing Cancer

- Colorectal Cancer Kit
- LifeScreen Colorectal Cancer Screening Program
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program
- Sun Smart Kit and poster
- Prostate Cancer fact sheet

Other Healthy Resources

- Fifty-Plus Health Kit
- Women's Health Kit
- HER newsletter for women
- HIM newsletter for men
- Building Blocks newsletter for preschool/child care workers and parents

Request materials and information on health services from:

- Learn To Live Line, 410-222-7979
- www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org
- Spanish Language Learn To Live Line, 410-222-4479
- www.aasalud.org for Spanish speakers
- www.SmokingStinks.org for teens and kids



Learn To Live HealthNotes is a newsletter from Learn To Live, a healthy living program of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, 1 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401. You may copy or reproduce any material in this newsletter.

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