

# Menthol Smoking in Kent County

## What is menthol?

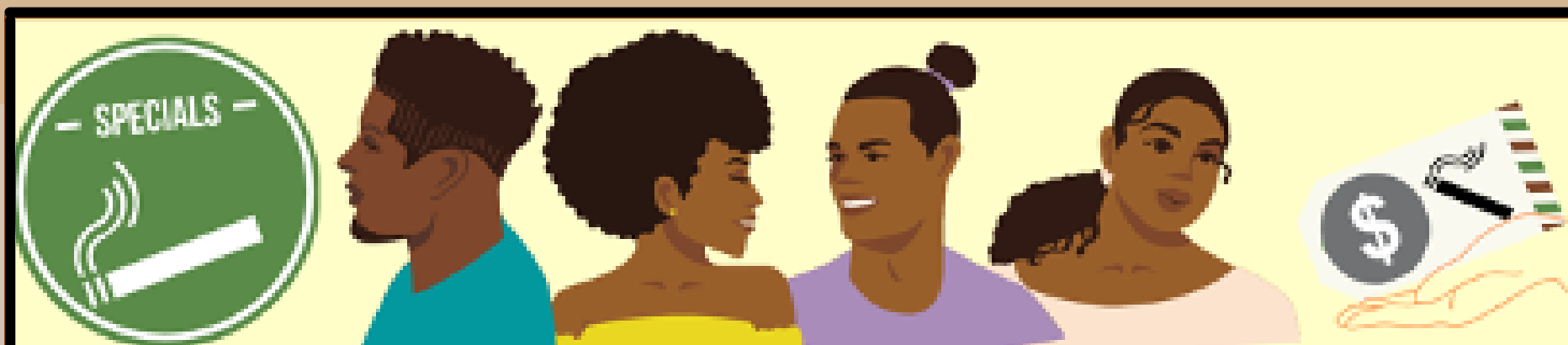
Menthol is a chemical added to cigarettes and other tobacco products. It creates a cooling effect which reduces the harshness of cigarette smoke and suppresses coughing. **Menthol makes cigarette smoking more addictive.**

According to the CDC, **"Tobacco use is a major contributor to the three leading causes of death among African Americans —heart disease, cancer, and stroke."**



## Targeting of the African American Community

**Tobacco advertisements are more common in African American neighborhoods, leading to increased use by the community.**



**Nearly half (42.3%) of African American smokers in Kent county have seen or heard tobacco advertisements**

**67.3% received coupons or ads for tobacco products**

## Menthol Bans Save Lives

Menthol is the only flavor additive allowed in cigarettes. The FDA is now moving toward banning menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars nationwide.

In Kent County, **71.2% of current African American smokers say they want to quit now**; banning menthol may help such smokers quit.

**In the US, more than 7 out of 10 African American youth ages 12-17 who smoke use menthol cigarettes.**

**In the US, almost 90% of African American smokers use menthol cigarettes compared to 46% of Hispanic smokers, and 29% of White smokers.**

**If you want to quit using tobacco, call or text the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for free information and referrals.**



In Kent County, **over 65% of African American smokers started before age 18**; many used menthol cigarettes when starting

LGBTQ+ individuals are **30% more likely to use menthol** cigarettes (compared to heterosexual/straight individuals)

**Learn more and take action today!  
Visit [EndMenthol.org](http://EndMenthol.org)**

**M[END]THOL**

**Tobacco Section  
Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Control  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services**

**Phone: 517-335-8376**

**Website: [www.michigan.gov/tobacco](http://www.michigan.gov/tobacco)**

**References:** Local data: "Smoking and Tobacco Use Behavior Assessment Study of the African American in Michigan-2020." This study sponsored by MDHHS Tobacco Control Program and conducted in partnership with Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [African Americans and Tobacco Use](#); Truth Initiative. (2018). [Menthol: Facts, stats and regulations](#); Villanti et al.(2017); U.S. Food and Drug Administration. [Preliminary scientific evaluation of the possible public health effects of menthol versus nonmenthol cigarettes](#); [Menthol and Other Flavors in Tobacco Products](#); O'Reilly, K. (2020); Cadham et al.(2020); Levy et al.(2011); Chaiton et al.(2019).