

FDA bans e-cig liquid products that look like snacks, candies

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E-liquid product is at left.

(HealthDay)—Potentially poisonous e-cigarette liquid made by 17

different manufacturers comes in packaging that strongly resembles that of candies, cookies and other snacks popular with kids.

And after warnings sent to the companies in May, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned the products on Thursday.

The agency told the companies that labels and ads for the nicotine-containing e-liquids were false or misleading, and potentially dangerous. In addition, several of the companies were previously cited for illegally selling the products to minors, the FDA said.

"Removing these products from the market was a critical step toward protecting our kids," FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb said in an agency news release. "We can all agree no kid should ever start using any tobacco or nicotine-containing product, and companies that sell them have a responsibility to ensure they aren't enticing youth use."

Examples of the products targeted in the warning letters included: One Mad Hit Juice Box, which resembled children's apple juice boxes; Whip'd Strawberry, which resembled a dairy whipped topping; Twirly Pop, which resembled a Unicorn Pop lollipop and was shipped with one; and Unicorn Cakes, which included images of a strawberry beverage and unicorns eating pancakes, similar to those used by the My Little Pony television and toy franchise.

"When companies market these products using imagery that misleads a child into thinking they're things they've consumed before, like a juice box or candy, that can create an imminent risk of harm to a child who may confuse the product for something safe and familiar," Gottlieb warned.

The FDA said it expects some of the companies to continue selling the products, but with revised labeling. The agency said it plans to continue

to monitor the situation.

"We're committed to holding industry accountable to ensure these products aren't being marketed to, sold to, or used by kids," Gottlieb said.

The rising popularity of e-cigarettes and related devices has coincided with an increase in calls to U.S. poison control centers and visits to emergency rooms related to e-liquid poisoning and other liquid nicotine exposure among children younger than 6, National Poison Data System figures show.

Small children who are exposed to or ingest e-liquids can suffer severe harm, including seizures, coma, respiratory arrest and death from cardiac arrest, according to the FDA.

The FDA also noted that more than 2 million middle and [high school students](#) in the United States were current users of e-cigarettes and similar products in 2016, and that availability of flavored-liquids is a major reason why youngsters use the devices.

There is evidence that nicotine affects a youngster's developing brain and may rewire it to be more susceptible to nicotine addiction later in life, the FDA said.

Gottlieb said his agency expects "to take additional, robust enforcement actions over the next few months that target those who we believe are allowing these [products](#) to get into the hands of children."

More information: The American Lung Association has more on [e-cigarette dangers](#).

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