

FDA will ban many flavored e-cigarettes

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(HealthDay)—The U.S. Food and Drug Administration will soon announce a ban on sales of most flavored electronic cigarettes in retail stores and gas stations across the United States, according to media

reports.

It's all part of the FDA's efforts to reduce teens' use of flavored e-cigarettes, long thought to be especially alluring to young people who then become hooked on nicotine.

A senior FDA official said details of the ban would be announced next week, and that menthol and mint flavors would be exempt, *The New York Times* reported. The agency will also mandate age-verification measures for online sales to prevent minors from buying the flavor pods.

"I think that there's a perception that e-cigarettes are a safer alternative for kids," FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb said in a recent interview with the *Times*. "But it can lead to a lifelong addiction, and some percentage will migrate to combustible products."

So, "in order to close the on-ramp to e-cigarettes for kids, we have to put in place some speed bumps for adults," Gottlieb said, referring to efforts such as the proposed ban.

The FDA first began its crackdown on flavored e-cigarettes earlier this year, as the number of teens using the products reached epidemic proportions, the *Times* reported. By far, the leading vaping product is made by Juul, whose e-cigarette devices resemble small computer flash drives. Use of Juul has skyrocketed among teens over the past year, and the company's products now command 70 percent of the market.

Flavored versions of e-cigarettes—including chicken and waffles, rocket Popsicle and "unicorn milk"—have boosted sales among the young even further, experts contend.

"The availability of flavors in e-cigarettes is one of the top reasons that middle and [high school students](#) cite as their motivation for using e-

cigarettes," said Patricia Folan, director of the Center for Tobacco Control at Northwell Health in Great Neck, N.Y. "Young people are more likely to try flavored e-cigarettes and consider them less harmful than tobacco-flavored e-cigarettes."

Responding to the trend, the FDA recently warned several e-cigarette makers to stop marketing to teenagers or risk being banned. Major companies were given 60 days to prove they could keep their devices away from minors, and the deadline is this weekend. Companies involved include Juul, RJR Vapor Co.'s Vuse, Imperial Brands' blu and devices made by Logic.

None of the companies have responded to requests by the *Times* for comment.

The FDA also warned 1,100 retailers to stop selling e-cigarettes to minors and fined some of them, the *Times* reported.

Folan applauded the FDA's move.

"Although the FDA plan is not a complete ban of flavored e-cigarettes, this measure is a very significant step in preventing youth initiation of e-cigarette products, which some studies have shown results in teens smoking combustible cigarettes as well," she said.

The proposed ban comes after months of meetings between the FDA and e-cigarette makers on how to reduce teen use of the devices.

In a statement last week, Gottlieb said some [e-cigarette](#) makers also seemed to support raising the minimum age for buying tobacco products to 21 years, the *Times* reported.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse has

more about [e-cigarettes](#).

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