

US warns liquid nicotine packets resemble juice boxes, candy

1 May 2018, by Matthew Perrone

E-liquid or food product?



FDA, FTC warn companies to stop misleading kids

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This image provided by the Food and Drug Administration shows an e-liquid nicotine. The US Food and Drug Administration issued warnings Tuesday, May 1, 2018, to more than a dozen makers of liquid nicotine for packaging their vaping formulas to resemble children's juice boxes, candies and cookies. (FDA via AP)

Federal health authorities issued warnings Tuesday to makers of liquid nicotine whose packaging resembles children's juice boxes, candies and cookies.

The Food and Drug Administration said the packaging practice is illegal for vaping formulas and could lead to poisoning if children mistakenly drink the liquids, which are intended for use with e-cigarettes and vaping devices. Exposure to nicotine, even in small amounts, can cause seizures, coma and fatal heart problems in children.

Some of the packages targeted by regulators look like juice boxes, Warhead candies and Nilla Wafers.

E-cigarettes are electronic devices that vaporize flavored liquid, which typically contains nicotine. Calls to poison control centers about nicotine

formulas have increased in recent years, according to the FDA, with more than 8,000 cases involving children between 2012 and 2017.

"These are preventable accidents that have the potential to result in serious harm or even death," said FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, in a statement. "Companies selling these products have a responsibility to ensure they aren't putting children in harm's way or enticing youth use."

Warnings were issued to 13 manufacturers, distributors and sellers. Several companies were cited for illegally selling their products to minors. Such warnings are not legally binding but the government can take companies to court if the issues are ignored.

Under federal law, people must be at least 18 years old to purchase vaping products. In some states the requirement is 21 and older.

The action comes one week after the FDA disclosed a nationwide crackdown on underage sales of Juul e-cigarettes, which have become popular among some teenagers as a way to vape at school and in public. The FDA issued warnings to about 40 gas stations, convenience stores and other retailers for selling the devices to minors. Additionally, the agency asked manufacturer Juul Labs to turn over information about how it markets and designs its products, which resemble computer flash drives and work with nicotine flavors like mango, and "cool cucumber."

The FDA gained authority to regulate e-cigarettes in 2016, but anti-smoking advocates have criticized the agency for not working more aggressively to stop companies from appealing to underage users.

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APA citation: US warns liquid nicotine packets resemble juice boxes, candy (2018, May 1) retrieved 5 March 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-liquid-nicotine-packets-resemble-juice.html>

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