

# Menthol cigarettes

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**In news-** Recently the US Food and Drug Administration has proposed rules for banning menthol cigarettes and all flavoured cigars.

## **Why ban?**

- The move aimed at not just curbing smoking in the American population, but also “reducing tobacco-related health disparities”.
- As per the US government survey, **nearly 85 percent of African Americans smoke menthol cigarettes, as opposed to 29 percent of White smokers.**
- While some states in the US have already banned menthol cigarettes, **the FDA plans to extend the prohibition countrywide.**
- There has been an **increase in tobacco use among American youth, driven mostly by e-cigarettes.**
- The proposed ban issued by the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) **does not cover electronic cigarettes.**
- **Apart from menthol, all other flavours in cigarettes were banned in the US in 2009.**

## **What are menthol cigarettes?**

- A menthol cigarette is **a cigarette flavored with the compound menthol.**
- **They are constructed similarly to non-mentholated cigarettes, with menthol added at any of several stages during the manufacturing process.**
- Menthol may be derived from distilled corn mint oil, or produced synthetically.
- While trace amounts of menthol may be added to non-mentholated cigarettes for flavour or other reasons, a menthol cigarette typically has at least 0.3% menthol content by weight.

- **Menthol is a chemical naturally found in peppermint and other mint plants, but it can also be made in a lab.**
- It was first added to tobacco in the 1920s and 1930s.
- **The menthol, with its minty taste and aroma, reduces the irritation** and harshness of smoking.
- This **increases appeal and makes menthol cigarettes easier to use, particularly for youth and young adults.**
- **Menthol also interacts with nicotine in the brain to enhance nicotine's addictive effects**, while making it more difficult for people to quit smoking.
- Menthol cigarettes usually attract adolescents who initiate with a flavoured product, then switch to regular cigarettes.
- **Menthol cigarettes were first developed by Lloyd "Spud" Hughes of Mingo Junction, Ohio, USA in 1924**, though the idea did not become popular until the Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company acquired the patent in 1927, marketing them nationwide as **"Spud Menthol Cooled Cigarettes"**.

### **Ban in other countries-**

- The **first country in the world to ban** menthol cigarettes was **Brazil, in 2012.**
- Canada banned these cigarettes in 2017, and the European Union in May 2020.
- Though the UK had left the EU by then, it too adopted the ban.
- Turkey, Moldova, and Ethiopia have also banned menthol cigarettes.
- **India has not banned the sale of menthol cigarettes.**

### **Scenario in India-**

- In **India chewing tobacco and bidi are the most common forms of tobacco use.**
- India has 26.7 crore tobacco users aged 15 and above, as per the last available Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS 2016-17) – **18% of the population uses smokeless tobacco,**

**7% smoke, and 4% use both.**

- **Tobacco use among 15-24-year-olds has been reducing in India**, from 18.4% in GATS-1 (2009-10) to 12.4% in GATs-2 (2016-17), a relative reduction of 33%.
- **India has no official estimate** on the number of people who use menthol or other flavoured cigarettes, but availability of various flavours has increased over the years.

### **Tobacco regulation laws in India-**

- **Tobacco regulation laws in India are covered under Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003, or COTPA.**
- It includes restrictions on advertisement, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products; prohibiting smoking in public places; prohibiting sale to and by minors; and prohibiting sale of tobacco products within a radius of 100 yards of educational institutions, and through mandatory depiction of specified pictorial health warnings on all tobacco product packs.
- **In 2019, the Centre banned electronic cigarettes.**
- In addition, different states have their own rules in place banning hookah consumption, including flavoured hookahs, in public places.

**Further**

**reading:**

**<https://journalsofindia.com/e-cigarette-or-vaping-devices/>**