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## New Tobacco Products: Implications for Campuses

The social climate for smoking is changing. More and more cities, states and campuses are implementing smoke-free policies. While Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data indicate that young adults have the highest rate of smoking, a University of California, San Diego study indicates that adults between 18 and 24 are more likely to make a serious quit attempt than adults between the ages of 50 and 64.

It is thought that the increase in cessation (quitting tobacco) rates is due to a change in social norms (Edwards, 2008). The current generation of young adults was taught that smoking is not glamorous, tobacco use does affect health, and that tobacco use is not always acceptable in social situations. The tobacco companies realize this and are modifying their products to fit into this environment or to appeal to potential smokers.

### New Smoking Tobacco Products

In order to make smoking more appealing to the younger generation, tobacco companies started, several years ago, to make their tobacco products flavored. They used flavoring such as mint, coffee, berry and citrus to make the cigarettes more palatable to someone who is not used to the taste of traditional cigarettes or chewing tobacco. The actual tobacco in all of these flavored tobacco cigarettes is the same, the only difference is a flavor pellet which is put into the filter (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2008).

More recently RJ Reynolds released Camel Crush. These cigarettes are regular cigarettes with pellets in them that the user crushes to get a burst of menthol.

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health spent time studying the effect of menthol cigarettes by conducting laboratory tests and reviewing tobacco industry documents. In their search of these documents they found research that stated brands with mild levels of menthol appealed to young smokers.

The tobacco industry documentation also stated, "First-time smoker reaction is generally negative. ... Initial negatives can be alleviated with a low level of menthol," (MSNBC, 2008). Thus it can be inferred that the Camel Crush was developed to entice a newer smoker who can potentially develop a taste for either menthol or regular cigarettes.

### New Smokeless Tobacco Products

The new smokeless tobacco product receiving the most media attention is Camel Snus. This product was designed in rebuttal to the passage of smoke-free policies. Snus is a packet, similar to a tea bag, of tobacco that users put between their upper lip and gum. The upper lip is used because it produces less saliva than if the user were to put the snus by their lower lip. This allows users to swallow any juices produced by the Snus versus having to spit them out, as one would do with traditional chewing tobacco (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2008).

There is another new realm of smokeless tobacco products. These are products that have no waste (i.e. there is no butt or bag to throw away) and are coined "dissolvable tobacco". Camel developed Orbs, Sticks and Strips. All three of these products dissolve in the users' mouth. The Orb is similar to a mint, the Stick is similar to a toothpick, and the Strip is similar to a breath strip (Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium, 2008). These products are small, discrete and potentially socially acceptable because there is no smoke or spit associated with them.

These products are being marketed toward smokers for situations where they cannot smoke. (Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2008).

### Implications for Campus

As with any new information, it is key to educate your campus community. The new smokeless tobacco products are not safe alternatives to cigarettes. In Sweden, where

snus has been available for years, snus has been shown to increase the incidence of oral and pancreatic cancers. While they might reduce the risk of lung diseases, smokeless tobacco products are not a form of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (nicotine gum, patch, etc.).

As these products become available locally, be sure to educate your peer educators so they are knowledgeable enough to answer questions.

One of the ways we can protect our campuses is to implement policies that encourage healthy behaviors by students, faculty and staff. It is important to look closely at current and future tobacco policies. When developing a new policy for your campus, consider a tobacco-free, versus smoke-free, policy. To learn how to develop a comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation program please refer to the S.T.E.P. by STEP Program. For more information regarding tobacco policy development please refer to *Momentum: Creating a Tobacco-Free Campus*, mailed to BACCHUS affiliates in Fall 2008.

### References

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