WHAT ARE TOBACCO LOOK-ALIKE PRODUCTS?
These are products that do not contain tobacco, but are packaged to look like tobacco products. There are candy, chocolate, bubble gum, and beef jerky equivalents to cigarettes, cigars, and chew. Both the product and the packaging resemble tobacco products and major tobacco brands.

KEY POINTS:

• Use of tobacco look-alike products promote social acceptability of smoking and chew use.

• A recent episode of the cable reality show Toddlers and Tiaras featured a 4-year-old lip-syncing to a song from Grease, complete with a candy cigarette as a prop.

• An informal review of YouTube videos tagged “jerky chew” resulted in 227 hits. Comments from predominantly pre-teen and teen boys on the jerky chew videos were similar to YouTube reviews of tobacco chew products.

• A similar analysis of YouTube videos tagged “candy cigarettes” resulted in 1640 hits, mostly with themes of humor (i.e. pretending to light them, giving them to children) and commentaries on how it is unbelievable that candy cigarettes still exist because they clearly are aimed at children.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

• These products look like tobacco products and may encourage youth to smoke.

• In a study of adults, current and past smokers were significantly more likely to have used candy cigarettes as a child than never smokers were. ¹
Candy cigarettes, jerky chew, and products like Big League Chew (bubble gum) are less prevalent than they were in the past. Mostly available at:
- Gas stations and convenience stores
- Discount stores
- On the Internet
- Old-fashioned candy stores

A case study of San Mateo County, CA indicated that of surveyed tobacco retailers 6-9% sold tobacco look-alike products anywhere in the store and 3-5% sold it within 3 feet of the tobacco products.²

In an effort to reduce tobacco sales to minors, 40 Attorneys General and major retail outlets (including ConocoPhillips, Safeway, ExxonMobil, Walgreen, Wal-Mart, and 7-Eleven) signed agreements that included provisions prohibiting the sale of tobacco look-alike products in the participating states.³

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

• Include tobacco look-alike products in tobacco-free school campus or organizational policies.
• Adopt a tobacco look-alike product plug-in for retail licensing ordinances (stores selling real tobacco products can not also sell candy or other simulated products).⁴

1 Klein, Jonathan D, Thomas, Randall K, et. al. (2007). History of childhood candy cigarette use is associated with tobacco smoking by adults. Preventive Medicine, 45, 26-30.