

Candy Tobacco

Trisha Richey

Candy cigarettes are sugar sticks that are shaped like cigarettes. Jerky Chew is beef jerky shredded to look like loose tobacco. Baseball Bubble gum is gum that's shredded like tobacco. Despite the government regulating tobacco use in America, companies are still permitted to produce and market products which imitate tobacco. Candy companies shouldn't be allowed to make tobacco promoting products like candy cigarettes, jerky chew, and baseball gum because these products encourage kids to use tobacco and create a positive feeling of smoking or dipping. The companies should be banned from selling the idea of tobacco use to minors and the result of candy tobacco is harmful.

Candy cigarettes imitate cigarettes in their packaging. Therefore, the government should ban candy cigarettes because candy cigarettes encourage children to smoke. A specific example of tobacco promoting candy cigarettes is Lucky Lights made by World Confections, Inc. Lucky Lights candy cigarettes are packaged in a small white box, the same size as a package of cigarettes. The top of the box has a blue seal, replicating the cigarette package. The name of the candy Lucky Lights gives the children the impression they can light-up the candy cigarettes just like smokers light up their cigarettes. On the package there's a four-leaf clover printed on the box to give children the idea they are "Lucky," like stated in the title. Lucky Lights candy cigarettes contain multiple long white candy sticks. The candy sticks are long and white, resembling cigarettes. The candy sticks are small enough they can be put between your fingers or in your mouth. Government should ban companies from producing candy cigarettes because the candy cigarettes' packaging looks like real cigarettes and encourages children to smoke.

Since candy companies are allowed to produce candy imitating cigarettes, children are using the candy to pretend smoke. When working as a cashier at a grocery store, I hear many comments kids say about candy cigarettes. Some of the things I heard recently are "Let's go get some smokes!" "Yah! Let's get some cigarettes!" I once observed a young boy buy a package of "Lucky Lights," put a candy cigarette in his mouth, take a depth breath and pretend to exhale smoke. The government should ban candy cigarettes because children are pretending to smoke and candy cigarettes encourage future tobacco use.

Marketing cigarettes to minors through magazine advertisements was banned in 1998 (Reuters), but candy companies can still sell the idea of smoking to minors. The FTC Bureau of Consumer Protection states the following regarding magazine articles, "What we have said is it causes underage consumers to smoke. We believe that the ad campaign was not the sole cause, but it contributed to the decision to imitate smoking or continue to smoke" (Teinowitz). It's ironic how the tobacco companies were banned from advertising but candy companies can still produce candy imitating tobacco.

Jerky Chew is beef jerky that is shredded and put into cans to mimic loose tobacco like chew. The government should ban companies from producing Jerky Chew. A specific kind of beef jerky is called "Jerky Chew" produced by Jack Links. Jerky Chew comes in a round cans similar to the tobacco brand Kodiak. The candy chew can has a wrapper around the side of the can, which is similar to the seal of a tobacco can. To open the can the consumer must break the seal. The can of the Jerky Chew has a black line to divide the can in half, like real tobacco chew. Jerky Chew has an animal skull just like the tobacco brand Kodiak. Kodiak has a grizzly bear on the can. The jerky itself is shredded, long and brown like real tobacco. Kids can also buy jerky chew by the logs. Logs are five single cans purchased at once. Kids can buy jerky chew by the logs like tobacco users buying their favorite tobacco by the logs. The government should ban companies from producing Jerky Chew because it looks like real tobacco and encourages children to use tobacco and the government should ban companies from producing Jerky Chew.

Jerky Chew is shredded so kids can put the jerky chew in their bottom lip like tobacco users. Doing this gives children the ability to imitate something adults can do. These actions could create future use of tobacco in teenagers. The children create a positive feeling with fake tobacco and feel cool. Working at a grocery store, I see children taking the labels off Jerky Chew and putting the cans in their back pocket like adults. The Jerky Chew leaves a ring in their pants pocket. Kids also put Jerky Chew in their bottom lip and spit their saliva into plastic cups like real tobacco users.

Bubble gum chew is gum shredded and packaged in a pouch like real tobacco. The package is similar in size and texture. Children can put the shredded bubble in their cheek like their favorite baseball player. A specific brand is Big League Chew by Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. The top of the Big League Chew bag is intentionally longer so the user is able to roll it down, to lock in freshness between uses just like the tobacco brand Red Man. Children can purchase Big League Chew, by the boxes. Boxes have ten single pouches per box; this connects the baseball gum to real tobacco.

The package on the Big League Chew has a baseball player hitting a ball, and the ball reads "Are you the next MVP?" This question on the package can give children the false connection between chewing Big League Chew and being a good baseball player. By printing a baseball player on the packaging the companies are marketing tobacco because baseball players were known for tobacco use on the field. Children can put the gum in their cheek like their favorite baseball player and spit.

In addition to products like Lucky Lights, Jerky Chew and Big League Chew there are many other tobacco promoting products like cigar bubblegum and candy pipes. Cigar bubblegum is bubblegum shaped like cigars. Cigar bubblegum has a paper seal like real cigars. Cigar bubblegum comes in a wooden box like real cigars. Candy pipes are plastic pipes that have candy trapped inside.

Lucky Lights, Jerky Chew and Big League Chew are all specific examples of products imitating tobacco products. At the grocery store children get excited when seeing products like Lucky Lights, Jerky Chew and Big League Chew because they can be like an adult using tobacco. These products all closely resemble tobacco products in their packaging and their appearance. The candy companies influence children through clever names and packaging. The products are made so children can eat the candy like tobacco users. The products have sugar and this gives the children a good feeling when eating and links their feelings to tobacco use. Candy companies should be banned from making products like these because they are selling the idea of tobacco use to children unknowingly.