

Banning Carcinogens

Menthol cigarettes, hair-straightening products and more.

December 11, 2023 By [Trent Straube](#)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is in the final stages of banning menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars as a way to prevent people from taking up smoking. Most youth who smoke use menthols. “For too long, tobacco companies have been enabled to promote menthol cigarettes to the Black community, preying particularly on Black youth,” wrote the Congressional Black Caucus to the FDA in a letter supporting the ban, which could take effect in 2024. It’s estimated that the ban will save 650,000 lives in 40 years.

The FDA also proposed banning hair-straightening products that contain formaldehyde, a chemical linked to uterine cancer, fertility issues and respiratory problems. The products are popular among Black women. In fact, four women are suing L’Oréal and other manufacturers, claiming that the hair relaxers caused them to develop breast and uterine cancers.

Finally, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed banning trichloroethylene (TCE), an “extremely toxic chemical known to cause serious health risks, including cancer, neurotoxicity and reproductive toxicity.” TCE is found in cleaning and furniture care products, degreasers, brake cleaners, tire repair sealants and other products. The EPA indicates that safer alternatives are already available.
