

IQOS and other Heated Tobacco Products: What Pediatricians and Families Need to Know

What is IQOS?

IQOS is a brand of heated tobacco product made by Philip Morris International. IQOS stands for “I-Quit-Ordinary-Smoking.”

In 2019, FDA approved IQOS for sale in the United States. The device costs approximately \$80, and the accompanying tobacco sticks are comparable to the cost of a pack of cigarettes.

Facts about Heated Tobacco Products:

Heated tobacco products are a new category of products which produce an aerosol containing nicotine, chemicals, additives, and flavorings by heating tobacco.

Heated tobacco products include a disposable tobacco stick called a “HEET” or “HeatStick” filled with compressed ground tobacco which is inserted into an electronic holder.

Heated tobacco products contain approximately the same amount of nicotine as traditional cigarettes. They are available in convenience stores and specialty shops.

Heated tobacco products are not the same as e-cigarettes: heated tobacco products use tobacco to deliver nicotine, whereas e-cigarettes use an e-liquid solution to deliver nicotine.

Heated Tobacco Products Are Not Safe:

Heated tobacco products contain tobacco. There is no safe type or level of tobacco use.¹

There is no evidence to demonstrate that heated tobacco products are less harmful than traditional cigarettes.^{2,3}

Tobacco companies claim that heated tobacco products are less toxic than cigarettes. However, all claims of lower risk have been based on research that is funded by the tobacco industry. Data are limited and do not include information about long-term health risks.³ Independent research is needed to determine the true level of risk.²⁻⁴

Public Health Concerns:

Heated tobacco products may appeal to youth: Heated tobacco products are sleek, high-tech devices that are being designed and marketed in ways that are known to effectively target youth youth.^{5,6} Strict FDA regulations are needed to prevent IQOS from being marketed or sold to youth.

Heated tobacco products are highly addictive: IQOS and other heated tobacco products contain nicotine. Youth are uniquely susceptible to nicotine addiction. The US Surgeon General has declared that youth use of nicotine in any form is unsafe.⁷

Heated tobacco products are available in menthol flavor: For decades, the tobacco industry has used menthol and other flavors to attract youth. Menthol masks the harshness associated with cigarette smoke, making cigarettes easier to smoke and harder to quit. Menthol cigarette use is disproportionately common among young smokers.⁸



Heated Tobacco Products contain many chemicals and components that have been designated as harmful by the FDA.

Some components include:

- Carbon Monoxide
- Nicotine
- Heavy Metals, including arsenic, lead, and mercury
- Acetone (found in nail polish remover)
- Ammonia (found in fertilizers and household cleaners)
- Benzene (found in gasoline)

References:

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4. Special Issue: Heated Tobacco Products (2018). *Tobacco Control*. 27(Suppl 1).
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