

## Mayo Clinic Minute: Why is menthol flavoring in cigarettes a problem?

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Video

Audio

	Nearly 100 years ago, the first mentholated cigarette was created. It was then marketed as a "throat cigarette."
	"Menthol mainly acts as a mild local anesthetic."
	Dr. J. Taylor Hays says that menthol cigarettes might have flavor, but that's not the point. The numbing effect makes the smoke less harsh.
J. Taylor Hays, M.D. General Internal Medicine Mayo Clinic	"So they don't get as much coughing, as much irritation in the throat and chest.
	Is the menthol itself addictive? Dr. Hays says there is little data to support that but ...
	"... without the irritant effect so that they get more nicotine exposure. They can smoke more. They can inhale more deeply. They can hold the smoke longer."
	Quitting menthol cigarettes might seem like an obstacle.
	"If menthol increases the exposure to a very addictive substance — nicotine — then those people who use menthol cigarettes may be more addicted, more dependent."
	But Dr. Hays says that should not discourage anyone because there is help.
	"They may be more dependent, but that the approaches that we take to treatment work, regardless of the type of tobacco you're using."
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.