

# TOBACCO FACT SHEET

## CIGARS, CIGARILLOS AND LITTLE CIGARS



- Cigars are defined by the US government as “any roll of tobacco wrapped in leaf tobacco or any substance containing tobacco” that does not meet the definition of a cigarette.<sup>1</sup>
- There are currently *three* major cigar products—little cigars, cigarillos and cigars.<sup>2</sup>
- Current federal tax classifications narrowly define them into two categories based on weight: little cigars and large cigars.<sup>3</sup> This two-pronged tax classification groups cigarillos with large cigars because they generally weigh more than three pounds per thousand.
  - **Little Cigars** (Small Cigars) weigh less than 3 lbs/1000 and resemble cigarettes.<sup>1</sup> Cigarettes are wrapped in white paper, while little cigars are wrapped in brown paper that contains some tobacco leaf. Generally, little cigars have a filter like a cigarette.<sup>4</sup>



CIGARETTE



LITTLE CIGAR

- **Cigarillos** (classified as large cigars) weigh more than 3 lbs/1000 and are classified as “large” cigars by federal tax code.<sup>1</sup> Cigarillos are longer, slimmer versions of a large cigar. Cigarillos do not usually have a filter, but sometimes have wood or plastic tips



CIGARILLO (TIPPED)



CIGARILLO

- **Large Cigars** weigh more than 3 pounds/1000.<sup>1</sup>



CIGAR

- Cigars, particularly little cigars and cigarillos, come in a variety of flavors. As is the case with flavored cigarettes, such flavorings may appeal to youth and young people.<sup>5-7</sup>
- A review of formerly secret tobacco industry documents found that little cigars were intended to replace cigarettes as cigarette advertising became increasingly restricted, and taxes on cigarettes, but not cigars, continued to increase.<sup>8</sup>

## HEALTH RISKS

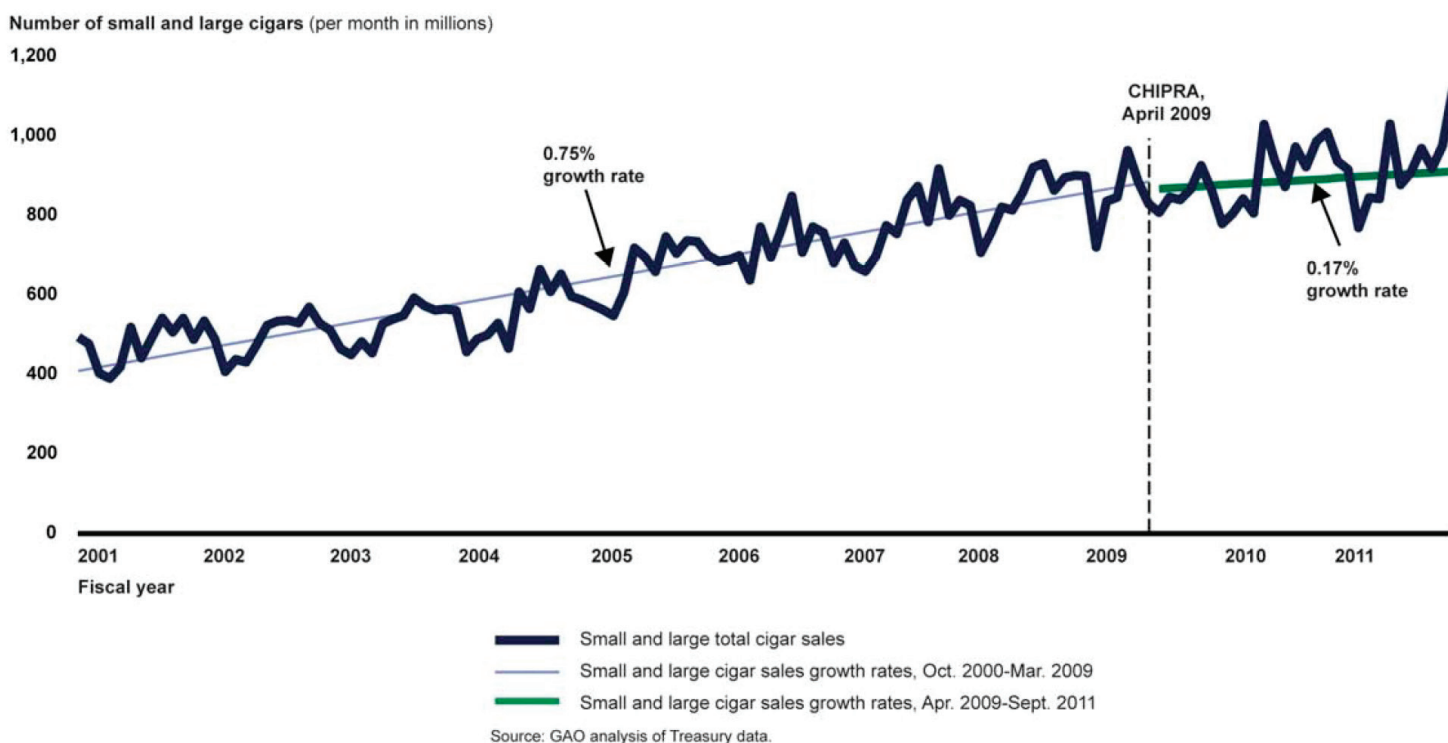
- Data suggests that little cigars and cigarillos may be smoked differently from large cigars, with deeper inhalation similar to that of cigarettes.<sup>8,9</sup> This deeper inhalation can exacerbate the health risks associated with large cigar use.
- Large cigars, little cigars, and cigarillos contain the same compounds as cigarettes and can be just as harmful and addictive.<sup>10</sup>
- Similar to cigarettes, all types of cigars can cause lung, oral, laryngeal, and esophageal cancers and impart the cigar smoker with a greater risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) than nonsmokers.<sup>11</sup>

- Cigar smoke is a growing source of environmental tobacco smoke in indoor air. Secondhand cigar smoke exposes nonsmokers to much higher levels of carbon monoxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) when compared to secondhand smoke from a cigarette.<sup>9</sup>

## INCREASED CONSUMPTION, LOWER TAXES AND REGULATION

- In the last decade, cigarette consumption rates have declined while cigarillos' and little cigars' sales rates have increased dramatically.<sup>12,13</sup>
- The recent increase in sales of little cigars is frequently attributed to increases in taxes on cigarettes, and historically much lower taxes on cigars.<sup>14-16</sup>
- Monthly sales of large cigars (including cigarillos) increased from 411 million in January 2009 to over 1 billion in September 2011, while small cigars (little cigars) dropped from about 430 million to 60 million cigars.<sup>17</sup>

### Combined U.S. Sales of Small and Large Cigars, Fiscal Years 2001-2011



SOURCE: United States Government Accountability Office. *Tobacco Taxes: Large Disparities in Rates for Smoking Products Trigger Significant Market Shifts to Avoid Higher Taxes*. GAO-12-475. Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, April 2012. Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/590192.pdf>. Accessed May 10, 2012.

- The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) of 2009 increased federal excise taxes on little cigars by \$0.97 to \$1.01 per pack of 20—bringing the tax rate on little cigars in line with cigarettes. The tax on large cigars and cigarillos was raised from 20.719% of the manufacturer's price (capped at \$0.05) per cigar to 52.75% of the manufacturer's price (capped at \$0.40) per cigar.<sup>18</sup>
- Cigars are not currently regulated under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (Tobacco Control Act). The Tobacco Control Act bans flavored cigarettes and the sale of packages of fewer than 20 cigarettes. These regulations do not apply to cigars, little cigars, or cigarillos. The FDA can extend these regulations but must do so through the rulemaking process.<sup>19</sup>

## PREVALENCE OF CIGAR USE AMONG YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

- There is not currently any national prevalence data for little cigar or cigarillo products. Most surveys ask about cigar use in general, which includes little cigars, cigarillos, and large cigars.
- Young adults, ages 18-25, have the highest prevalence rates for past 30-day use of cigars compared to youth and other adults.<sup>20</sup> Over one-tenth (11.2%) of young adults smoke cigars in some form.<sup>20</sup>
- The top five brands of cigars among young adults are Black & Mild, Swisher Sweets, Phillies, White Owl and Garcia y Vega, all of which are primarily cigarillo and little cigar products.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2009, more than 10% of high school students were current cigar smokers.<sup>22</sup> Nearly 7% of females and 15% of males in high school were current cigar users, including cigarillos and little cigars.<sup>22</sup>
- High school youth cigar smokers by race (2009):<sup>22</sup>
  - 11.9% Caucasians;
  - 11.8% Hispanics;
  - 7.1% African Americans; and
  - 4.8% Asian Americans.
- Among middle school youth in 2009, almost 4% were current cigar smokers.<sup>20</sup> Almost 5% of males and approximately 3% of females in middle school were current cigar users, including cigarillos and little cigars.<sup>22</sup>
- Middle school youth cigar smokers by race (2009):<sup>22</sup>
  - 6.2% Hispanics;
  - 4.7% African Americans;
  - 3.0% Caucasians; and
  - 1.4% Asian Americans.

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<sup>126</sup> U.S.C. 5702. Available at: <http://uscodebeta.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-title26-section5702&f=treesort&num=0&hl=false&saved=%7CCKHRpdGxlOjI2IHNIY3Rpb246NTcwM5kgT1lgKGdyYW51bGVpZDp1c2NjdC0yNi01NzAxKQ%3D%3D%7CdHJIZXNvcnQ%3D%7C%7C0%7Cfalse>. Accessed May 21, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> U.S.C. 5701. Available at: <http://uscodebeta.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=%28title:26%20section:5701%29%20OR%20%28granuleid:uscct-26-5701%29&f=treesort&num=0#sourcecredit>. Accessed May 11, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Trade Bureau. Available at: [http://www.ttb.gov/main\\_pages/schip-summary.shtml](http://www.ttb.gov/main_pages/schip-summary.shtml). Accessed May 11, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking & Tobacco Use: Cigars. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/cigars/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/cigars/). Accessed May 22, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Trinkets and Trash: Artifacts of the Tobacco Epidemic. Available at: <http://www.trinketsandtrash.org>. Accessed May 1, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Carpenter CM, et al. New Cigarette Brands with Flavors that Appeal to Youth: Tobacco Marketing Strategies. *Health Affairs*, 2005; 24(6):1601-1610.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis MJ, Wackowski O. Dealing with an innovative industry: A look at flavored cigarettes promoted by mainstream brands. *Am J Public Health*, 2006; 96(2): 244-251.

<sup>8</sup> Delnevo CD, Hrywna M. "A whole 'nother smoke" or a cigarette in disguise: how RJ Reynolds reframed the image of little cigars. *Am J Public Health*, 2007; 97(8):1368-75.

<sup>9</sup> Henningfield JE, Fant RV, Radzius A, Frost F. Nicotine consumption, smoke pH and whole tobacco aqueous pH of some cigar brands and types popular in the United States. *Nicotine Tob Res*. 1999;1(2):163-168.

<sup>10</sup> Jolly DH. Exploring the use of little cigars by students at a historically black university. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 2008;5(3):1-9.

<sup>11</sup> National Cancer Institute (1998). Smoking and tobacco control monographs: Monograph 9: Cigars: Health effects and trends. Chapter 4 (105 – 160); Bethesda, MD. National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute; NIH Pub. No. 98-4302. Available at: [http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/m9\\_complete.PDF](http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/m9_complete.PDF).

<sup>12</sup> US Dept of Agriculture, Economics Research Service. Tobacco Outlook. Oct 24, 2007, TBS-263. Available at: <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/ers/TBS//2000s/2007/TBS-10-24-2007.pdf>. Accessed May 1, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Maxwell JC. The Maxwell Report: Cigar Industry in 2008. Richmond, VA: John C. Maxwell, Jr. 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Ringel J, Wasserman J, Andreyeva T. Effects of public policy on adolescents' cigar use: evidence from the National Youth Tobacco Survey. *Am J Public Health*, 2005; 95: 995-998.

<sup>15</sup> Delnevo C, Hrywna M, Foulds J, Steinberg M. Cigar use before and after a cigarette excise tax increase in New Jersey. *Addictive Behavior*. 2004; 29: 1799-1807.

<sup>16</sup> Delnevo C, Foulds J, Hrywna M. Trading tobacco: are youths choosing cigars over cigarettes? *Am J Public Health*, 2005; 95: 2123.

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- <sup>18</sup>Public law 111-3, Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009. Available at: [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ003.111.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ003.111.pdf). Accessed May 1, 2012.
- <sup>19</sup>21 U.S.C. 391 et seq.
- <sup>20</sup>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-41, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-4658. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011. Available at: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/2k10Results.htm>.
- <sup>21</sup>Cullen J, Mowery P, Delnevo C et al. Seven-year pattern in US cigar use epidemiology among young adults aged 18-25 years: a focus on race/ethnicity and brand. *Am J Public Health*, 2011; 101(10):1955-1962.
- <sup>22</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco Use Among Middle and High School Students --- United States, 2000–2009. *MMWR*, 2010; 59(33):1063-1068.