



# BIDIS



Remember the cigarette-shaped gum that was sold in packs just like the real thing? Now the real thing is candy-flavored. In an insidious way, tobacco companies are "softening" the transition from candy to nicotine by sweetening their cigarettes. This fact sheet provides basic information about these flavored cigarettes, which are growing increasingly popular among teens.

## What are they?

Bidis (also spelled beedies) are small, unfiltered cigarettes that come in a variety of flavors which appeal to children. These include Strawberry, Cherry, Cinnamon, Black Liquorice, Mango and Mandarin Orange. They consist of shredded tobacco rolled in dried tendu leaves (a plant native to India) and are secured with a string. Many believe they resemble marijuana.

## Where do they come from?

Bidis are imported from India where the tobacco industry employs over 300,000 children who roll up to 2,000 bidis each day, six and a half days a week.

## How are they harmful?

CDC reports that bidis contain 3 to 5 times more tar and nicotine than regular cigarettes, but less tobacco. As with cigarettes, users risk developing oral and lung cancers. It has also been documented that bidi rollers suffer from lung disease from constantly inhaling tobacco dust, and have high rates of asthma, tuberculosis and other respiratory disorders.

## Where are they sold?

Bidis are sold at convenience and tobacco stores, as well as on the Internet, where proof of age is not required. According to a San Francisco study, stores sold bidis to minors without enforcing the age identification requirement twice as often as for regular cigarettes.

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Information Provided by:  
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