



PRESS RELEASE

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More than 1/3 of Teens Surveyed ID Flavored Tobacco as Candy *Teen-led survey supports criticism that new Camel Orbs resemble Tic Tacs*

RICHMOND- More than a third of nonsmoking teens incorrectly identified a new smokeless tobacco product as being either candy, mints or gum in a survey of more than 2,433 Virginia residents conducted by the [Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's](#) volunteer teen action group, [Y Street](#).

About 42 percent of young people under age 18 identified Camel Orbs Fresh, dissolvable mint- and cinnamon-flavored brown tobacco pellets, as mints or candy based on its packaging. Additionally, among teen respondents who do not currently use tobacco, 28 percent said they would try Camel Orbs Fresh based on its packaging. (Nationally, critics have been complaining that Camel Orbs' packaging strongly resembles Tic Tac breath mints.)

Y Street conducted its survey of 2,433 Virginia residents (from 227 Virginia localities), including 1,190 young people under the age of 18, as part of its **MeltDown Campaign**, which targets smokeless and dissolvable tobacco products such as Camel Orbs. Current Y Street action projects include sending complaint letters to teen-friendly publications that are advertising the products. (Reynolds advertises for Orbs in magazines with large youth readerships such as People, Entertainment Weekly and Rolling Stone, extolling the product as "date friendly" and "stadium friendly.") More information about the MeltDown Campaign can be found at www.meltdownva.com.

Among the MeltDown Campaign survey's findings:

- 42 percent of teens surveyed believed Camel Orbs to be candy, mints or gum, based on its packaging
- 53 percent of respondents believed that Frost (a flavor of Camel Snus) was a flavor associated with candy, gum or mints, and 69 percent said they would try a Frost-flavored product. Among non-tobacco-using teens under 18, the percentage of those who would try a Frost-flavored product rose to 69 percent.

The complete MeltDown Campaign survey report and findings may be found at: www.HealthyYouthVA.org/documents/Meltdown.pdf.

"The Y Street youth became aware of these new products and immediately saw the potential danger they could present to their peers," says Danny Saggese, VFHY's marketing director. "By taking on a national issue with a campaign they developed, Y Street is proving to be one of the premier youth-led advocacy movements in the country. Plenty of states can boast they have youth activists that are anti-tobacco, but Y Street youth can boast about creating positive social change for all Virginians."

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Y Street member Rima Patel, a senior at Monticello High School in Charlottesville, worked on the MeltDown Campaign because she believed that new tobacco products like Camel Orbs will be appealing to kids because of their flavoring and the fact that they can be easily mistaken for mints or candy.

“Camel Orbs come in real small packaging like in a mint or candy tin. If [teens] kept them in their pockets, a teacher wouldn't really be able to notice what it actually was,” Patel says. “Teens could hide Camel Orbs in an Altoids or gum container instead of in its actual packaging just to hide it. It would become tricky to know what the student was actually chewing on.”

In a recent editorial in the medical journal Pediatrics, Dr. Laurence R. Deyton and Dr. Marisa L. Cruz of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Tobacco Products wrote, “The candy-like appearance, added flavors, and easily concealable size of many of these products may be particularly appealing to children and adolescents.”

Manufactured by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco (which denies that the product resembles candy), Camel Orbs is being test-marketed in Portland, Ore., Columbus, Ohio, and Indianapolis. Some flavored, smokeless tobacco products, such as Camel Snus Frost, are already available in Virginia, and more products (including Marlboro Peppermint Snus and a product that resembles dissolvable breath strips) are being test marketed in other cities.

A recent study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health found that Camel Orbs possesses elevated concentrations of absorbable nicotine due to the product's alkalinity. The dissolvable products are slated for a congressionally mandated FDA review in the next two years. U.S. Sens. Frank R. Lautenberg, Sherrod Brown and Jeff Merkley have all urged the FDA to force R.J. Reynolds to take Camel Orbs off the market pending more study. In an April 18 New York Times interview, Merkley called the products “tobacco candy,” noting that “everything about them is designed for kids.”

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) launched the Y Street volunteer movement for high school teens in 2004. Since then, more than 3,000 teens statewide have joined the organization and attended its training sessions. (There are about 700 to 1,000 active Y Street volunteers statewide at any given time.) The Y Street Leadership Team (consisting of a core group of exceptional teen volunteers) helps develop ideas for volunteer action projects, such as MeltDown, that will further Y Street's mission of educating Virginians to make healthy lifestyle choices, including preventing and reducing tobacco use.

[Rescue Social Change Group](#), a VFHY contractor with offices in Alexandria, Va., and San Diego, conducts Y Street trainings and assists Y Street volunteers with building Web sites and facilitating projects in cooperation with VFHY staff. Rescue SCG is a marketing agency that works exclusively for agencies that advance positive social changes among young people, such as prevention campaigns for drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

Y Street teens conducted surveys for the MeltDown Campaign from May 2009 to June 2010. VFHY and Rescue staff tabulated and analyzed the surveys, finalizing and releasing the results this spring. The survey findings are based on a sample of convenience, not a random sample.

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About the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth:

Established by the Virginia General Assembly, the **Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth** was formerly known as the Virginia Tobacco Settlement Foundation. The Foundation is responsible for statewide efforts to prevent and reduce youth tobacco use and childhood obesity. Since the Foundation began its work in 2001, teen smoking in Virginia has been almost cut in half.

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth directly reaches more than 141,000 children through classroom-based prevention programs in hundreds of public schools, after-school programs, community centers, daycares and prevention programs statewide. The Foundation's award-winning "Y do u think" marketing campaign delivers prevention messages to 600,000 children annually through TV and radio ads and Internet content.

The Foundation is funded through a portion of Virginia's share of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA).

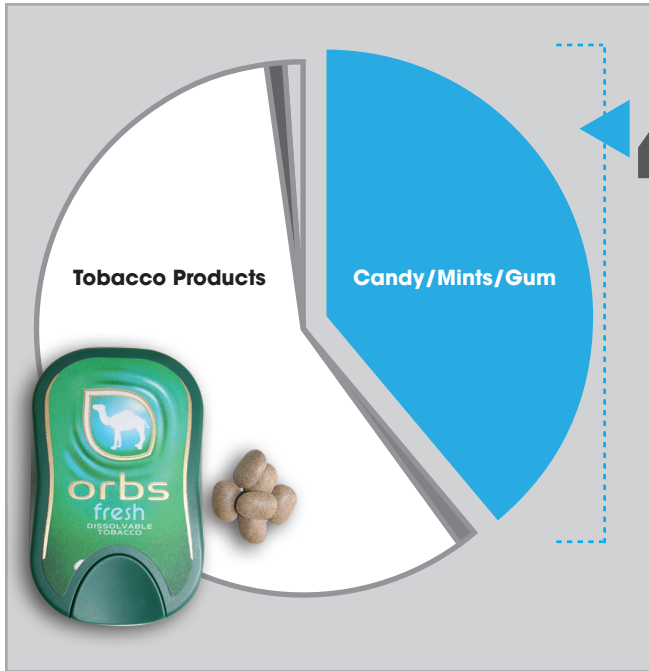
For more information about the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, please see our [brochure](http://HealthyYouthVA.org/pdf/HealthyYouthBrochure_lores.pdf) at HealthyYouthVA.org/pdf/HealthyYouthBrochure_lores.pdf.

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Virginia Survey on New Tobacco Products

Virginia youth collected 2,433 surveys from the general public from May 2009 to June 2010. These opinion surveys assessed whether the new smokeless and spitless tobacco products are mistakenly perceived as candy or mints because of their packaging and flavoring. The facts featured below are major findings from the survey. Please visit meltdownva.com for more survey findings.

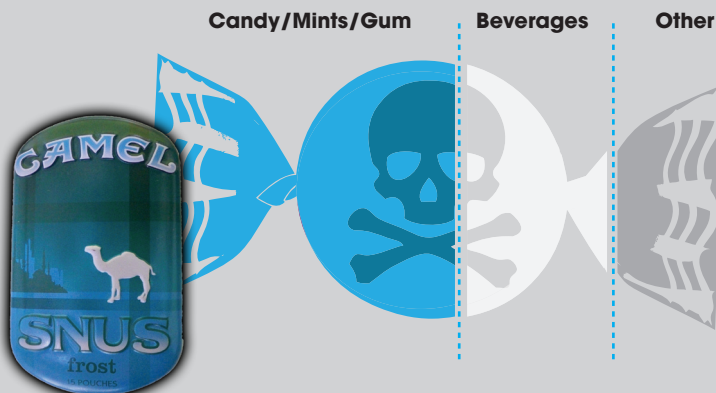


42% OF TEENS THOUGHT CAMEL ORBS WERE **CANDY, MINTS OR GUM** BASED ON ITS PACKAGING.



81% OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVED THAT **WINTERGREEN**, A SMOKELESS TOBACCO PRODUCT FLAVOR, WAS ASSOCIATED WITH CANDY, GUM OR MINTS.

53% OF RESPONDENTS BELIEVED THAT **FROST**, A SMOKELESS TOBACCO PRODUCT FLAVOR, WAS ASSOCIATED WITH CANDY, GUM OR MINTS.



28% OF TEENS WHO **DO NOT CURRENTLY USE TOBACCO** SAID THEY WOULD TRY CAMEL ORBS FRESH BASED ON ITS PACKAGING.



Some Recent Media Reports about Camel Orbs:

Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 7, article about Va. Foundation for Healthy Youth survey:

http://www2.timesdispatch.com/rtd/business/local/article/B-TOBA07_20100506-210802/342684/

New York Times, April 19, article about Camel Orbs controversy:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/19/business/19smoke.html>

The Columbus Dispatch, May 2, article about Sen. Brown wanting Camel Orbs taken off market:

http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2010/05/02/brown-wants-candylike-tobacco-taken-off-market.html?type=rss&cat=&sid=101

Convenience Store News, May 3, article about RJ Reynolds Tobacco's focus on new smokeless tobacco products

http://www.csnews.com/csn/cat_management/tobacco/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1004088365&imw=Y

The Colbert Report, April 28, humorous satire about Camel Orbs:

<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/308747/april-28-2010/cheating-death---tobacco-mints--breast-milk---hallucinogens>