

# Burn for Greens, Smoke for Kids, Rise for Thinness, Die without Shots

By ACSH Staff — February 5, 2010

Dispatch: Burn for Greens, Smoke for Kids, Rise for Thinness, Die without Shots

## **Americans Will Not Tolerate Safe, Effective Products**

The chemical manufacturer Albemarle bought a full-page ad in yesterday's *USA Today* announcing their shift to more “environmentally-friendly” flame retardants. The ad mentions that they're phasing out one of their biggest-selling products, decaBDE, because, “While this flame retardant has saved lives for decades, and the safety of the product has been extensively studied with no evidence of adverse effects to humans, some stakeholders have voiced concerns.”

“They are caving to their critics and trying to appease the anti-chemical activists,” says ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan.

ACSH's Jeff Stier agrees: “Their product is safe, but they're taking it off the market because some so-called 'environmental groups' voiced concern about health effects even though the claims are not supported by science. By phasing out the product for no reason other than activist complaints, they're handing over corporate governance to the activists.”

“It's less like we're living through *Atlas Shrugged* and more like 'Atlas caved,’” adds ACSH's Todd Seavey.

## **Keep Smoking, For the Children**

[The FDA sent letters to R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and the smaller Star Scientific Inc.](#) [1]

to voice concern that the companies' flavored, dissolvable tobacco products could be appealing to children. Meanwhile, in Utah, a bill approved Tuesday by a state legislative subcommittee proposes [to ban electronic cigarettes and “candy-flavored” tobacco products](#) [2].

“The perversity of this whole thing is that the anti-harm-reduction crowd says these products promote dual use,” says Stier. “Of course they do. That's all they're allowed to promote. If regulators got out of their way and allowed them to say that these products are less harmful than smoking, they could promote them as substitutes. As it is, it's the FDA saying that they're equally dangerous.”

“The excuse is always that it's for the children,” says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. “Children are not affected at all by this. Young people shun candy-flavored products, since they crave being perceived as grown-up, cool. Candy-flavored products connote the opposite, which is why banning such flavoring will have zero impact on initiation of smoking in teens. The FDA itself found miniscule levels of toxins and carcinogens in e-cigarettes, in much lower levels than those in cigarettes, but the message from a ban on these products is that they're dangerous even though we have no evidence to demonstrate that. E-cigarettes have been on the market for three years now, and no single human being has been harmed, but already the FDA seems to be saying you

should stick to regular cigarettes.”

### **New Diet Advice: Sleep Upstairs**

A report published in the journal [Obesity](#) [3] suggests that living at high altitudes can promote weight loss independent of exercise habits. The researchers believe the mechanism may be related to metabolism, perhaps as a result of increased levels of the “hunger hormone” leptin.

“This has been all over the news,” says Stier, who returned this morning from skiing at 11,000 feet in the Rocky Mountains. “The media likes to cover these types of studies, but we have very serious questions about the applicability of this to the real world. While this is something that scientists should continue to research, those of us watching our weight will have to rely on harder-to-follow but more substantiated diet advice: consume fewer calories and burn more of them.”

Dr. Ross agrees: “I wouldn't call this a junk-science study, but it's definitely too small to make any useful generalizations. It only studied twenty people for a short amount of time. It's very preliminary.”

### **Adults Need Shots Too**

A report released jointly yesterday by the Trust for America's Health, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reveals that [40,000 to 50,000 American adults die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases](#) [4].

“Most of those deaths are from the flu and pneumonia,” says Dr. Ross. “Too few adults get their immunizations.

*Curtis Porter is a research intern at the American Council on Science and Health ([ACSH.org](#) [5]).*

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[1]

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100204/ap\\_on\\_bi\\_ge/us\\_fda\\_dissolvable\\_tobacco;\\_ylt=AkiOXncgmDueJumU1f1L9YXV](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100204/ap_on_bi_ge/us_fda_dissolvable_tobacco;_ylt=AkiOXncgmDueJumU1f1L9YXV)

[2] <http://tobaccoanalysis.blogspot.com/2010/02/utahs-proposed-action-on-e-cigarettes.html>

[3]

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/livescience/20100204/sc\\_livescience/obesepeopleloseweightathighaltitudes;\\_ylt=Am\\_\\_SCnXZ](http://news.yahoo.com/s/livescience/20100204/sc_livescience/obesepeopleloseweightathighaltitudes;_ylt=Am__SCnXZ)

[4]

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20100204/hl\\_hsn/toofewadultsgetrecommendedvaccinations;\\_ylt=ApDxGHzTF83RyyPdg](http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20100204/hl_hsn/toofewadultsgetrecommendedvaccinations;_ylt=ApDxGHzTF83RyyPdg)

[5] <https://www.acsh.org/././..>