

Sweet cigarettes

From the sweeties.net wiki

Sweet cigarettes, or candy cigarettes, were one of the more controversial sweets of the old sweet shop: sticks of sugar made and packed to look like real cigarettes. They are still made, but they are no longer called cigarettes in Britain, and many people now look at them very differently.

What they were

Sweet cigarettes first appeared in the late 19th century. Most were made of chalky sugar, though some were bubble gum or chocolate, wrapped in paper and packed and branded to look like cigarettes. Some even hid powdered sugar in the wrapper, so you could blow through the sweet and puff out a cloud of sugar like smoke. One brand, Popeye Cigarettes, had red tips to look like a lit cigarette, before being renamed candy sticks and made without the red tip.

In Britain, Barratt made them. By the 1950s, sweet cigarettes were one of the seven main types of sweet Barratt produced, alongside rock, sherbet products, starch goods, liquorice, boilings, and caramels and toffees: see [Dip Dabs](#) for more on Barratt.

Why they became controversial

Candy cigarettes have long been controversial, because research suggests they prime children to take up smoking. A 1990 study found that children aged around 11 or 12 who ate candy cigarettes were twice as likely to smoke as those who did not. A 2007 study of nearly 26,000 adults found that 88 per cent of current and former smokers reported eating candy cigarettes, compared with 78 per cent of people who had never smoked.

The packaging was part of the problem. Tobacco companies and sweet makers once worked together, letting candy cigarettes carry branding almost identical to real cigarette brands. After the United States Surgeon General's report on smoking in 1964 criticised candy cigarettes for trying to lure young people into smoking, tobacco companies began to distance themselves from them.

Candy sticks today

Several countries have banned the sale of candy cigarettes, including Australia and Brazil. In Canada, the law stops candy cigarettes carrying branding that looks like real cigarette brands, and in the United States they cannot be labelled as cigarettes. In the United Kingdom they are still on sale, but labelled as candy sticks, to remove the association with smoking.

An uncomfortable memory

Sweet cigarettes are a good example of how attitudes change. Like the golliwog on sweet wrappers, they are part of the history of the British sweet shop that is now seen very differently: see [the golliwog and British](#)

[sweets](#). For a very different approach to sweets and smoking, see the Chupa Chups story: [Enric Bernat, Chupa Chups and Salvador Dalí](#).

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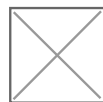
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