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Tobacco companies have been steadily increasing the nicotine content in cigarettes, making them more addictive. The largest percentage increase -- 20 percent -- was in a brand of Kool cigarettes marketed to African Americans.

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**APA**


**CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE**


**Transcript**

Big Tobacco Increases Nicotine in Cigarettes

BRIAN WILLIAMS, anchor:

There was a lot of angry reaction today to the news that tobacco companies have been steadily increasing the nicotine content of their cigarettes, and they seem to be targeting one particular group of smokers. Our chief science correspondent Robert Bazell has our report.

ROBERT BAZELL reporting:

A new study finds the companies increased the nicotine content in cigarettes by an average of 10 percent over six years.

TEXT:

Increased Nicotine 10% average 1998 to 2004

BAZELL: Susan Foster of Columbia University's Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse says this reveals the company's true motives about children and smoking.

Ms. SUSAN FOSTER: What we see is that the addiction potential of a drug is related to how fast it hits the brain and how big the hit is. So an increase in nicotine means a bigger hit. That's what it's all about, getting kids hooked early.

BAZELL: The Massachusetts Department of Public Health obtained the data on nicotine content changes as part of its settlement agreement with the tobacco companies.

Ms. SALLY FOGERTY: And then, all of a sudden, you see another jump.

BAZELL: Deputy commissioner Sally Fogerty says the type of cigarette did not matter.

Ms. FOGERTY: Whether it was light, whether it was ultra light, whether it was your regular brand, menthol or non-menthol, filtered or non-filtered.

BAZELL: The study found that in the most popular brands with young smokers--Marlboro, Newport, and Camel--the nicotine increased an average of 13 percent. In Kool, a menthol brand marketed to African Americans, it increased 20 percent.
We contacted the big tobacco companies today, and they either had no comment or said they were reviewing the Massachusetts study.

This is not just about underage smokers. Clearly when there's more nicotine in the cigarette, everybody has more difficulty quitting.

WILLIAMS: And Bob, while we have you tonight, I know there’s news this evening on melanoma.

BAZELL: Yes, a prominent researcher at the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Steven Rosenberg, is reporting this evening that he cured 2 out of 17 patients with advanced melanoma by genetically engineering their white blood cells to attack the cancer. Now this sounds exciting, and it is exciting, but these are clearly small numbers. And this is a lab that in the past has gotten a lot of publicity for things that didn't pan out.

WILLIAMS: Well, cure is a big word and we will be cautious in reporting it. Bob, thanks for that.