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Smokers light up despite recall

(AP) — Five days into a nationwide recall of 8 billion cigarettes, many of the possibly tainted smokes were still being sold, and smokers appeared to be ignoring offers for refunds.

Possibly defective filters in Marlboros, Virginia Slims and some other brands could cause eye, nose and throat irritation, dizziness, coughing and wheezing, or just leave a bad taste in the mouth, Philip Morris USA said when it announced the recall on Friday.

"I've never met a cigarette that didn't make me do that anyway. I thought that's what they were for," said Chris Edwards, a bond trader in Albany, N.Y., who smokes Marlboro Lights.

The plan was for smokers to return the cigarettes for refunds at any store selling the same brand. Philip Morris, meanwhile, said it would immediately seize the cigarettes and reimburse its 330,000 retailers for any refunds.

But on Tuesday, many smokers and stores weren't going along.

Like many others contacted randomly by The Associated Press, Edwards said he doesn't plan to return his cigarettes. And some store owners said they would keep selling them until contacted by the company.

"I don't think it's that big of a deal," said Art Bazzi, manager of a Union 76 gas station in Detroit. "They did not send a representative or call to make us remove the cigarettes."

The long holiday weekend complicated efforts to seize the possibly tainted cigarettes. Philip Morris said more than half had been pulled from stores, warehouses and wholesalers as of Tuesday.

About a half dozen customers asked about the recall during the weekend, then bought the cigarettes anyway, Bazzi said.

"If you're a smoker, you'll smoke anything," said Mike Burn, a bar owner in Stamford, Conn., who has switched from regular Marlboro to Marlboro Medium, a milder and unaffected version.

The company is speeding production of replacement cigarettes and hopes to resupply stores by the end of the week, said Karen Daragan, Philip Morris USA spokeswoman.

Philip Morris first noticed the problem on May 19. It wasn't until last Friday that the company determined that potentially contaminated filters could have reached retailers, Daragan said.

The company said it ordered the recall after learning that a chemical used in the filters had been contaminated, forming an irritant known as methyl isothiocyanate in some of the cigarettes.

Philip Morris said the plasticizer, used to strengthen the filters, was contaminated at the supplier, Hoechst Celanese of Somerville, N.J. Hoechst said it hasn't found any evidence it contributed to the problem.

Brown & Williamson, which makes Kool and other brands, said it was notified by Hoechst of a possible defect and returned its stock of plasticizer before it was used.

Meanwhile, many smokers apparently have concluded that the symptoms don't sound that harmful.

"It didn't sound like a big deal. I assume the ones I bought are safe," Christine Santos, 22, said in Providence, R.I.

Med schools adapt to female pupils

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — On an all-male dormitory floor at the Yale School of Medicine, topless pictures of Demi Moore and Kate Moss hang on a bulletin board beneath a diagram of the chemical structure for testosterone.

Testosterone Alley, the unofficial name given the floor, is one of the few places left at the school where first-year male medical students hold sway.

For the first time in the school's 182-year history, women outnumber men among the first-year students, making up 56 percent of the class that entered in 1994. And Yale is not alone.

Eighteen of the nation's 126 medical schools reported a majority of women in their first-year class this academic year, including Harvard and Johns Hopkins, two other top-ranked institutions where it was also a first.

At both schools, women made up 53 percent of the first-year class.

Medical school officials are hard-pressed to explain the shift. Yale's admissions director, Lynne Wootton, said the school did not even notice until it tallied its final numbers.

At Harvard, an admissions officer ventured a guess.

"Women seem to communicate better in the interview," said Gerald Foster, associate dean for admissions. Because some female applicants are older, Foster also said, "they bring some life experiences and maturity that adds to a class."

But with so many different factors — test scores, recommendations and interviews — influencing admissions decisions, officials at Yale, Harvard and Hopkins said it is difficult to pinpoint what is behind the numbers.

For the past three years, women have made up about 42 percent of the students applying to U.S. medical schools. They also represented 42 percent of the new entrants last year.

Final figures for this fall's medical classes are not yet available.

Hopkins has been admitting women since 1893, Yale since 1916, and Harvard since 1945.

Yale has had to make some changes to accommodate the increase in women: A coed locker room outside its anatomy labs had to be converted into a women's locker.

But the gradual gender shift

has not created any big waves among students. Both men and women said the dynamics were the same as in their undergraduate years.

"It is hardly something I notice now," said Lynda Kauls, 24, of St. Paul, Minn., a first-year student at Yale.

Robert Gifford, an associate dean at Yale, said it is necessary to take the long view to appreciate the changes. He said the medical school has shed its fraternity-house atmosphere over the past several decades and become a more gentle place.

"I can't tell you how much better it is," he said. "It is a much more civil place to be."

Gone are the days when professors at medical schools would illustrate parts of the body with pictures of women in bikinis or Playboy centerfolds — or in a case recalled at Yale, ask women to step outside a lab while an off-color joke is told.

The men may be learning to curb displays of chauvinism but the photos hanging in Testosterone Alley show some behavior is not easily changed.

The men say the photos are there for fun. The women rolled their eyes in disgust.

Madonna's guard shoots intruder

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A private security guard who shot a man during a struggle in Madonna's back yard likely won't be charged because the intruder lunged for his gun, authorities said Tuesday.

Robert Dewey Hoskins, 37, was booked Tuesday for investigation of making terrorist threats and stalking the pop star, who wasn't at her Hollywood Hills mansion at the time. No charges were immediately filed.

Police said Hoskins scaled the 8-foot pink-and-orange fence around Castillo del Lago early Monday evening and came within 40 feet of the house, once used as a gambling palace by mobster Bugsy Siegel.

Detective Andrew Purdy said security guard Basil Stephens confronted Hoskins, and Hoskins twice lunged for the guard's pistol.

"There was a tussle over his gun," Purdy said. Authorities said the shooting appeared to be justified and the guard wouldn't be charged.

Hoskins was treated at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center for gunshot wounds in the left arm and pelvis and then transferred to a jail hospital.

"There have been reports made by Madonna that he has been threatening her and stalking her," police Capt. Mike McDonagh said.

Under California law, a shooting would be justified under a number of circumstances, including self-defense, defense of a home or property, and resisting an attempted felony.

Last July, Stephens caught another intruder, handcuffed him, and held him until police came. Todd Michael Lawrence, an Arizona drifter, pleaded no contest to trespassing and was sentenced to a year in jail.

In December, another gatecrasher, Robert Wasserburger, was sentenced to six months in jail for trespassing. Those cases were prosecuted as misdemeanors.

Through a spokeswoman, Madonna declined to comment.