

# Don't Fall for Hot Pink Camels

Wall Street analysts may be applauding R. J. Reynolds for introducing a feminized version of its macho Camel cigarette brand, and company executives clearly think they have hit on an innovative marketing strategy. But this new attempt to woo women smokers can only be viewed as another cynical blow to public health.

The Reynolds executives apparently don't care that lung cancer among women is the only major form of cancer whose death toll is rising. Lung cancer kills far more American women than does the much more feared breast cancer. And smoking is overwhelmingly the leading cause of lung cancer, not to mention its contribution to heart disease, emphysema and all sorts of other health problems.

So now comes R. J. Reynolds with its new female-friendly Camel No. 9 and a campaign to promote it costing an estimated \$25 million to \$50 million. The name is supposed to evoke "cloud nine" or being "dressed to the nines," according to Reynolds marketers, although some think it may also suggest

luxury perfumes like Chanel No. 19 and romantic songs like "Love Potion No. 9." As described by Stuart Elliott in last Thursday's Times, the company is reaching out to women with slogans like "light and luscious," hot pink and teal packages and ads adorned with flowers.

This would all seem laughable if it were not so pernicious. No doubt Reynolds will fall back on a tobacco company mantra: it's not trying to woo new smokers to a dangerous product; it's just trying to convert existing ones to its brand. But we all know that the tobacco business will wither away unless it finds new smokers to replace those who quit or die.

Bipartisan bills were introduced in both houses of Congress last week to give the Food and Drug Administration needed authority to regulate tobacco products and restrict marketing to young people, consistent with free-speech principles. That may not do much to wean their elders from the habit. But it could stop young women from being entrapped by cynical marketers.