



Alliance for Natural Health USA
1350 Connecticut Ave NW
5th Floor
Washington DC 20036

email: office@anh-usa.org
tel: 800.230.2762
fax: 202.315.5837
www.anh-usa.org

ANH-USA is a regional office of ANH-Intl
INTERNATIONAL
anhinternational.org

Contact:

Gretchen DuBeau, 800-230-2762

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Cash Register Receipts Contaminated with BPA

ANH-USA Petitions Consumer Products Safety Commission
to Have the Toxic Chemical Banned from Register Receipts

The Alliance for Natural Health USA (ANH-USA) is asking the Consumer Products Safety Commission to have BPA banned from cash register receipts.

BPA, or bisphenol-A, is an industrial chemical. It is used to make polycarbonate plastic food and beverage containers, the resin lining of cans, dental sealants, and a wide range of other common household products. It also is found in thermal paper used for cash register receipts.

Numerous research studies have documented the serious health risks from exposure to BPA. Animal tests show that BPA, which is also a synthetic estrogen, is an endocrine disruptor that can **cause reproductive and behavioral abnormalities, lower intellectual ability, and set the stage for cancers, obesity, diabetes, asthma, and heart disease.** As a result, there have been nationwide efforts to ban it from food and beverage containers, especially those used by babies and children.

In February 2009, ANH-USA filed a Citizen Petition with the US Food and Drug Administration asking them to study and warn the public of the effects of BPA in children's dental treatments and devices, an area that has received almost no attention. The FDA acknowledged receipt of the petition, but has otherwise responded with silence. The agency has expressed concerns, however, about the potential effects of BPA on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children.

Canada is moving forward with legislation that bans the importation, sale, and advertising of polycarbonate baby bottles, and has issued a health warning to its citizens not to use any product containing BPA if it is to be heated or warmed. **Health Canada proposed classifying the chemical as “toxic to human health and the environment.”** Here in the US, a panel convened by the National Institutes of Health determined that there is clear evidence for concern about BPA’s effects on fetal and infant brain development and behavior. In addition, there are concerns that BPA could interfere with the sexual development of children.

Today, ANH–USA filed a Citizen Petition with the Consumer Products Safety Commission. The Commission is charged with “protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from thousands of types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction.”

In her statement released today, Gretchen DuBeau, ANH–USA’s executive director, said, “New studies reveal that BPA is found in cash register receipts in concentrations far greater than we ever expected—from fast food restaurants, gas stations, post offices, and big retailers, wherever thermal receipts are dispensed.”

“Even if we are careful to avoid BPA in bottles and other products,” DuBeau continued, “we all handle these receipts every day—making them the most common pathway into your body. Our skin deeply absorbs the chemicals it comes in contact with, and from there they enter the bloodstream. We think it is unconscionable for the CPSC to allow such a dangerous chemical to come in contact with the public so casually.”

This spring, researchers at the Environmental Working Group collected samples of cash register receipts from stores and post offices in seven states and the District of Columbia and had them tested by a renowned lab. The lab found that 40 percent had high levels of BPA. And just last week, a new study by John C. Warner, acclaimed as the co-founder of “green chemistry,” found measurable levels of BPA in receipts from eight out of ten suburban Boston-area grocery stores.

“The only way to protect ourselves and our families—and particularly American citizens who work as check-out clerks and have to handle these receipts continually—is to get the government to ban BPA in cash register receipts completely,” DuBeau concluded. “We’re receiving toxic chemicals against our will. **The government puts vitamins in our bread to reduce birth defects—yet they allow us to be contaminated by BPA, which causes birth defects! It just doesn’t makes sense.**”

NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

The Alliance for Natural Health USA (ANH-USA)

www.anh-usa.org

The Alliance for Natural Health USA (ANH-USA) is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization that protects Americans' rights to access integrative medicine and dietary supplements. The Alliance for Natural Health USA is part of an international organization dedicated to promoting natural, sustainable healthcare through good science and good law.

We protect the right of natural health practitioners to practice; the right of consumers to choose the healthcare options and treatment modalities they prefer, including complementary and alternative medicine; and the right of companies to produce and market quality natural health products, including nutritional supplements, to their customers.

As a membership-based organization, we unite consumers, practitioners, and industry to speak with a common voice. We have worked since 1992 to shift the medical paradigm from an exclusive focus on surgery, drugs, and other conventional techniques to an "integrative" approach incorporating food, dietary supplements, and lifestyle changes.