

## Cash register receipts a new BPA concern

October 12 2009, By Melissa Hinch-Ownby

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If you read environmental news on a regular basis then you know that consumers are in an uproar about the revelation that SIGG water bottles contain bisphenol-A (BPA), despite the company's previous BPA-free advertisements. The reusable water bottle news continued last week when the news came out that GAIAM aluminum bottles leach BPA at a rate that is significantly higher than the SIGG bottles. However, savvy consumers may want to consider another source of BPA -- cash register receipts.

A new article on the Science News Web site reports that many receipts from cash registers and credit card machines contain BPA, and much more BPA than the aluminum water bottles contain:

"John C. Warner, an organic chemist and co-founder of the Warner Babcock Institute for [Green Chemistry](#), explains the use of BPA in receipts. 'Manufacturers would coat a powdery layer of this BPA onto one side of a piece of paper together with an invisible ink, he says.

'Later, when you applied pressure or heat, they would merge together and you'd get color.'"

Warner's research shows that the BPA in these receipts can be measured on the milligram level, compared to the nanograms measured in aluminum water bottles. He is so concerned about the possible exposure issues that he considers BPA containing receipts to be the biggest exposure risk to consumers.

As with most items containing toxic compounds like BPA, it is hard for consumers to determine which receipts may have BPA and which don't. There is no requirement in place for businesses to label their BPA containing paper products so your latte from the local coffee shop might come with a BPA-free receipt but the receipt from the neighborhood market might contain BPA.

When I first read this article, I thought that this would be a great opportunity for businesses to embrace the electronic receipt concept used by Apple stores and other eco-minded retailers. As a business owner, you can reduce your company's paper waste by offering your customers electronic receipts sent via e-mail. This not only cuts down on printing costs associated with receipts (which often get thrown in the garbage or recycled anyway) but it could also reduce [BPA](#) exposure by your employees and customers.

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