

# Avoid those thermal paper cash receipts, says well known anti-science BPA critic, vom Saal

By ACSH Staff — October 22, 2014



If you believe what you read about BPA and its harmful effects

on human health, a [topic that we here at ACSH](#) <sup>[1]</sup> have taken on many times, the latest development from Frederick vom Saal, Professor of Biological Sciences at Missouri University and perhaps the best-known fringe anti-BPA activist posing as a scientist, might stop your shopping habits, or at least make you think twice before choosing to get a receipt. In [his latest fear-mongering attempt](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, he tries to link BPA from receipts to increased levels of BPA in the blood stream. So what?

Researchers had subjects use hand sanitizer and then hold thermal paper receipts. Subjects then ate French fries using their hands. Following the consumption of the fries, researchers measured the level of BPA in the blood of the subjects, and found that BPA was absorbed very rapidly.

To which vom Saal concludes: BPA from thermal papers will be absorbed into your blood rapidly; at those levels, many diseases such as diabetes and disorders such as obesity increase as well. Use of BPA or other similar chemicals that are being used to replace BPA in thermal paper pose a threat to human health."

However, this is clearly not the case. The CDC [has concluded](#) <sup>[3]</sup> that consumer exposure to BPA from all sources (including from thermal receipts) is about 1000 times lower than those levels considered safe. The FDA has also concluded from a comprehensive review of hundreds of studies that BPA, as used in consumer products, is safe.

In fact, [no other compound](#) [4] has been as widely tested or as widely used as BPA. As ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross has said, Since BPA is well-known to be rapidly metabolized and excreted, and to have about one-millionth the hormonal power of our natural estrogens, it is inexplicable how any mechanism can be concocted to explain such health effects as vom Saal suggests as a result of BPA exposure. He now adds, The fact that vom Saal can get higher levels of BPA in his subjects which he uses as his own guinea pigs by exposing them to BPA-containing products means...what exactly? Measuring chemicals and finding variable levels does *not* mean they are toxic, as he knows, or should know.

And ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava adds, Although it is clear that BPA is completely safe at the levels to which we are exposed, isn't it unethical for vom Saal to expose his study subjects to these dangerous receipts since he is so clearly not on the side of science and believes BPA to be harmful?

This is hardly the first time this silly issue has come up. In 2012, ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom castigated *New York Times* columnist Nick Kristof for his fear-inspired, ignorant piece about deadly chemicals, including BPA on cash register receipts. Dr. Bloom's piece in *Medical Progress Today* entitled Why I Don't Write About Pottery From the Ming Dynasty can be read [here](#) [5].

For more information about BPA safety, read ACSH's publication [here](#) [6]!

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#### Links

[1] <http://acsh.org/2014/08/another-organic-chemist-weighs-bpa/>

[2] <http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0110509>

[3] <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/recent-study-on-bpa-exposure-from-thermal-receipt-paper-is-of-limited-relevance-to-consumers-351765495.html>

[4] <http://acsh.org/2014/07/senator-chemophobe-tries-ban-bpa-food-packaging/>

[5] <http://www.medicalprogresstoday.com/2012/05/why-i-dont-write-about-ming-dynasty-sculpture.php>

[6] <http://acsh.org/2005/01/the-facts-about-bisphenol-a/>