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## THE HIDDEN DANGER IN YOUR HANDS: WHY RESTAURANTS AND RETAILERS SHOULD RETHINK THERMAL RECEIPTS



**In a world where convenience often comes at a cost, one common business practice is raising quiet but serious health concerns: the continued use of thermal paper receipts.**

Thermal receipts, which are found in nearly every restaurant, cafe, and retail store, are coated with a chemical called bisphenol A (BPA) or its common substitute BPS. Both are endocrine-disrupting compounds. These substances can be absorbed through the skin with repeated handling, putting employees, especially cashiers, servers, and cooks, at potential risk.

### The Science Behind the Concern

BPA and BPS mimic estrogen in the body and have been linked to a wide range of [health](#) issues, including:

- Hormonal imbalances
- Fertility issues
- Developmental problems in children
- Increased risk of certain cancers



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- Neurological effects

A 2019 study published in the *Journal of Exposure Science & Environmental Epidemiology* found that handling receipts for just a few seconds can result in measurable levels of BPA in the bloodstream. For those in the service industry who touch receipts dozens or even hundreds of times per day, the exposure adds up.

## Who Is Most at Risk?

The danger is not in the occasional contact by a customer. It is the repeated, daily exposure that workers face. Fast [food](#) workers, baristas, store clerks, and anyone in front-line customer service are constantly in contact with these receipts, often unaware of the potential health implications.

And it is not just a workplace issue. It is an equity issue. Many of these workers are young adults or people from underserved [communities who may already face limited healthcare access and economic](#) challenges. Exposure to harmful chemicals should not be part of the job.

## A Call for a Safer Alternative

Several large retailers, such as CVS and Best Buy, have already begun offering digital or emailed receipts. This is a step in the right direction. But for many small businesses and restaurants, the switch has not happened yet, often due to lack of [awareness or concerns](#) over cost and convenience.

Here is the truth: there are safer, more modern alternatives:

- Digital receipts via email or SMS
- Printed receipts using BPA/BPS-free thermal paper
- Receipt-optional checkout flows





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Implementing these options does more than protect workers. It modernizes the customer experience and demonstrates a [business's commitment to health and safety](#).

Leading With Responsibility

If you run a restaurant, retail [shop](#), or small business that issues thermal receipts, it is time to ask the hard question: Is this worth the risk to my team's health? Transitioning to safer alternatives is an investment, but it is one that reflects [leadership](#) and care.

We have come too far in the fight for worker safety to ignore what is literally in our hands.

**Are you willing to make the switch?**