



July 8, 2011 by [Patrick A. Malone](#)

## AMA Seeks New Policies on BPA, Competitive Eating and Airport Scanners

At its annual meeting last month, the American Medical Association's House of Delegates adopted **several new policies**, including one that recognizes that bisphenol A (BPA) interferes with human hormones, one that decries the practice of competitive eating and one calling for more research on full-body scanners used in airports.

The AMA says **BPA** is an endocrine-disrupting agent and wants products with the potential to increase human exposure to the chemical to be clearly identified. Studies have shown that BPA may be linked to male sexual dysfunction, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and liver abnormalities. BPA is used to soften plastics in baby bottles, cups and plastic packaging. In 2008, the FDA said there was evidence to connect commonly used levels of BPA to some health issues, but its conclusions were questioned by an advisory panel.

**Competitive eating**, in which contestants speedily ingest the most food possible within a certain time limit, is a practice the AMA finds deleterious to gastrointestinal health (and thinking people everywhere find disgusting and offensive in a world where millions starve every day.) The AMA's Young Physicians section noted that speed eaters are in danger of vomiting, reflux, choking, stomach rupture, diabetes and tooth enamel erosion.

Calling for more research, the AMA determined that there aren't enough data on potential health risks of the new **full-body scanners** used at some airports. Radiation experts and medical physicists

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agree that the full-body backscatter scanners that create an anatomically accurate image produce minuscule levels of radiation that pose no real health risks. But questions remain: What effects will the low-dose X-rays have on skin and what would happen if a machine's "on" mechanism jammed and delivered a dose of radiation that is exponentially higher than intended?

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