

acash

Association for Consumers Action on Safety & Health
Registration No. 80m-393/86 GBBSD

Servants of India Society Building 2nd Floor, 417, S.V.F Road Girgaum, Mumbai
400 004 Tel.: 2388 6556, 2388 7354 Fax : 2388 7340
E-mail : acashorg@vsnl.com



acash is an independent, non-profit, voluntary organisation addressing health-related consumer issues and advocating for the rights of consumers and the general public.

(Donations to **acash** qualify for deduction u/s80G(i) of Income Tax Act, 1961)

ASSOCIATION FOR CONSUMERS ACTION ON SAFETY AND HEALTH (acash)

Association for Consumers Action on Safety and Health (acash) is an independent non-profit voluntary organisation formed to study, research, assist and deal with health-related consumer issues and to protect the rights of the consumers and the general public. acash was founded by a group of doctors, lawyers and other concerned individuals, in 1986.

acash serves as an information centre to educate, guide and disseminate information in the field of health and safety issues.

acash is a member of Consumers International, Global link, International Network of Women Against Tobacco (INWAT), International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), Health Action International (HAI), Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI), All India Drug Action Network (AIDAN), Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI).

acash has representation on various government committees like Central Pollution Control Board {Ecomark technical sub committee}, Bureau of Indian Standards (Sub committee on Soaps and Detergents) and Maharashtra Breastfeeding Promotion Initiative (MBPI).

acash has been appointed by the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resources Development (Department of Women and Child Development) as per gazette notification GSR 540(E) to monitor and report violations of the "Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992."

PROJECTS & CAMPAIGNS

Pharmaceuticals and drugs

To collect and provide information on hazardous drugs and adverse drug reactions; to campaign for a rational drug policy and essential drugs at low cost and to bring out publications on drug information.

Maternal, infant health and nutrition

- To study and recommend appropriate health care facilities and nutritional requirements for expectant and nursing mothers and infants.
- To protect, promote and support breastfeeding.
- To train health professionals in Human Lactation Management Training (HLMT) and counseling for successful breastfeeding.
- To foster and form 'Mother to Mother Support Groups'.
- To co-ordinate the efforts of doctors, nurses, health workers, primary health care centres and voluntary organisations in the field of infant feeding practices at the state and national level.
- To monitor and work for the implementation of the Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992 throughout the country,
- To lobby for infant friendly health policies.

Tobacco Control

- To create awareness among different groups at risk of tobacco hazards.
- To mobilise mass support against tobacco company tactics.
- To lobby with the Government tobacco control policies and legislations.
- To build and co-ordinate tobacco control networks and coalitions at city, state, national and south east Asia level.
- To conduct research on the socio-economic implications of tobacco production, use and marketing.
- To network with international tobacco control organisations and movements.
- Health Rights
- To provide education and training in relation to rights and responsibilities of consumers and patients regarding safety and health.
- Legal Cell

Health Rights

To process consumer complaints in relation to safety and health eg. issues dealing with marketing of banned and hazardous drugs, false claims of food and drug companies and medical negligence.

Environmental Safety

To collect and disseminate information in relation to environmental pollution, chemically harmful products etc.

acash's Publications

Helping Mothers to Breastfeed English (Rs. 125/- per copy), Marathi (Rs.80/-per copy) only.

Maternity Home Practices and Breastfeeding (Rs. 75/- per copy).

The Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992 (Rs. 20/- per copy).

Five Steps for Healthy Living (Rs. 5/- per copy). Available in Hindi/English.

Questions and Answers on Breastfeeding (Rs. 5/- per copy). Available in Hindi/ English/Marathi and Gujarathi.

Video Film: Healthy Living and Healthy Food habits (Rs. 200/- per cassette). Available in Hindi/English.

Membership

Annual Membership Rs. 100/- Life Membership Rs. 1,500/-

Associate Membership

Institutional/Organisations Rs. 500/-p.a. Corporate (Companies) Rs.2,500/-p.a.

We encourage you to become a member of acash and help us reach out to you.

If you wish to be a member of acash , please complete the attached form and get a member of acash to propose your name. If you are not known to any member, please enclose your bio-data. Submit the completed form along with appropriate DD in favor of " acash" at the acash administrative office.

USE OF DRUGS

CONSUMER ACTION : WHAT YOU CAN DO?

1. Stop using banned, hazardous, useless and irrational drugs.
2. Tell the members of your family, friends, neighbours and community about banned, hazardous and useless drugs and inform them of the alternatives.
3. Avoid combination drugs as far as possible.
4. Avoid expensive brand-named drugs. Buy the cheaper generic equivalent. It is equally good.
5. Refuse to take a drug if the expiry date is over or if the colour has changed.
6. Encourage the use of traditional home remedies made from locally available resources instead of expensive and unnecessary drugs for trivial problems.
7. Prefer doctors who prescribe only essential, single or rational combination drugs (despite pressure to do otherwise from both patients and the drug salesmen).
8. Whenever you are prescribed a drug, you have a right to ask your doctor what side-effects may occur, how long you should continue taking the drug, what are the expected benefits, and whether you should avoid certain food or drink while taking the drug. Encourage other people to obtain this important information from their doctors, especially in the case of pregnancy, liver and kidney damage or known drug sensitivity.
9. Do not insist on taking injections if tablets, syrups or ointments will be just as effective.
10. Be sure that anyone who is prescribed antibiotics or long term treatment for diseases like tuberculosis and leprosy, takes the medicine regularly and for the proper length of time.

Some dangerous drugs which you should avoid and help us in getting them banned:

1. **Anabolic Steroids for Children:** eg. Deca-Durabolin, Orabolin, Trinergic, Mixegen. These drugs stunt the growth of children and disturb their sexual development.
Safer alternatives: Nutritious food to maintain normal growth.
2. Analgin/dipyrone and drugs containing these: eg. Baralgin, Codolsic, Esgipyrin, Novalgin, Oxalgin, Spasmizol and Ultragin can cause Agranulocytosis which is a fatal blood disease.
Safer alternatives: Paracetamol (Crocic, Metacin, Pyrigesic, Calpol) Buscopan and Cyclopam.
3. Oxyphenbutazone & Phenylbutazone and drugs containing them: eg. Algesin, Bestophen, Buta proxylon, Flamar, Oxalgin, Reducin, Rumatol, Sufaril, Tanderil and Zolandin. Can cause Agranulocytosis (a fatal blood disease), stomach ulcers, liver and kidney damage.
Safer alternatives: eg. Ibuprofen (Brufen, Ibugesic Magafex).
4. Clioquinol: eg. Amicline, Diodoquin, Enteroquinol, Intestopan etc. can cause SMON (a serious nerve disease causing blindness and paralysis).
Safer alternatives: Metronidazole alone or with Diloxamide Furaoate (Flagyl, Metrogyl, Entamizole, Dydradom).

For further information on any of these drugs, please refer to VHAI publication 'Banned and Bannable Drugs' or write to: 'Voluntary Health Association of India', 40 Institutional Area, Near Qutub Hotel. South of IIT, New Delhi 110 016.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

The Secretary

Association for Consumers Action on Safety and Health (acash) Servants of India Society Building
2nd Floor, 417, S.V.P Road, Girgaum
Mumbai - 400 004

Dear *Sir/Madam*,

I wish to be a member of **acash** . I agree to abide by its rules and regulations." I desire to take an active part in the functioning of the organisation. The required particulars are given below:

Name: _____

Age : _____ Occupation : _____

Qualifications : _____

Residential Address _____

_____ Tel. No.: _____

Office Address : _____

Tel. No.: _____

E-mail : _____

Other organisations and activities I am involved in (areas of consumer action in which you are interested in participating) :

Type of Membership : Life / Annual / Associate (Institutional/Corporate)

I herewith send the sum of Rs. _____ (Rupees _____) as my subscription by Cash/DD/MO/Cheque

No. _____ dated _____ drawn on _____

(Bank name).

Thanking you,

Your's sincerely,

Proposed by

(Signature)

Name: _____

Signature of the proposer :

Place and Date :

' Rules and Regulations are available at the administrative office of acash. " For cheques drawn on banks outside Mumbai kindly add Rs. 25/-.

A PATIENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS

(Adaptation from American Hospital Association, 1973)

1. A patient has the right to considerate and respectful care.
2. The patient has the right to obtain from his physician complete current information concerning his diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis in terms the patient can be reasonably expected to understand.
3. The patient has the right to receive from the physician information necessary to give informed consent prior to the start of any procedure and/or treatment.
4. The patient has the right to refuse treatment to the extent permitted by law and to be informed of the medical consequences of his action.
5. The patient has the right to every consideration of his privacy concerning his own medical care program.
6. The patient has the right to expect that all communications and records pertaining to his case should be treated as confidential.
7. The patient has the right to expect that within its capacity a hospital must make reasonable response to the request of the patient for services.
8. The patient has the right to obtain information as to any relationship of his hospital to other health care and educational institutions in so far as his care is concerned.
9. The patient has the right to be advised if the hospital proposes to engage in or perform human experimentation affecting his care or treatment, the patient has the right to refuse to participate in such research or projects.
10. The patient has the right to expect reasonable continuity of care.
11. The patient has the right to examine and receive an explanation of his bill regardless of the source of payment.
12. The patient has the right to know what hospital rules and regulations apply to his conduct as a patient.

All these activities must be conducted with an overriding concern for the patient, and above all, the recognition of his dignity as a human being. Success in achieving this recognition assures success in the defence of the rights of the patient.

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATIONS

The apparently punitive transfer of FDA commissioner who ordered closure of Glaxo India Ltd. for 10 days for non-disposal of sub-standard drugs was challenged in the High Court in 1993. Thereupon the company accepted its mistake and closed shop for the demanded period.

- Baby food companies Johnson & Johnson and Wockhardt were brought to tender apologies on being dragged to court in 1996 for violation of the Infant Milk Substitutes Act, 1992.
- acash had brought to the High Court's attention the indiscriminate promotion of high dose Oestrogen-Progestrone combination. The court instructed the Central Government to ban the drug - initially the tablets and on further litigation the injections as well.
- The committee appointed by the High Court in response to a petition by acash bringing to light the bad maintenance of post-mortem rooms and wrong disposal of dead bodies thereof, has made recommendations regarding their improvement. Government is given a one year period to implement these recommendations.
- Based on a study conducted among traffic policemen by the Indian Institute of Sciences, acash had filed a petition in 1999 in the High Court demanding protection and regular monitoring of their health and regulation of the pollution levels in the city This triggered off the landmark judgment insisting on strict PUC certification of the city cabs.
- In order to improve the quality of Eye Banking in the country, acash has filed a petition in the Maharashtra High Court demanding registration of eye banks based on appropriate rules and regulations. Responding to this, the Court has directed the State Government to ask the concerned central ministry to frame these rules.