

Melanoma / Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY APPLAUDS EFFORTS OF THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TO PROTECT THE OZONE LAYER

*20th Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol
Heralded as Important International Milestone*

SCHAUMBURG, ILL. (May 7, 2007) – Ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun is one of the leading causes of skin cancer worldwide. Although the earth's ozone layer offers us some protection from harmful UV radiation, a group of chemicals that includes chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) threatened to seriously deplete this protective shield – sparking a pivotal international treaty known as the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer that is credited with reversing this dangerous trend.

“As the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol approaches, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and all international parties responsible for initiating and implementing this landmark treaty should be commended for their commitment to protecting the ozone layer and, in effect, sparing future generations of people from a higher incidence and potentially more lethal forms of skin cancer,” said dermatologist Diane R. Baker, MD, FAAD, president of the American Academy of Dermatology.

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In the early 1970s, scientists discovered that emissions of CFCs – commonly used as propellants in aerosol products, such as spray deodorants, refrigerants, solvents, and foam-blowing agents – were depleting the ozone in the upper atmosphere. In fact, scientists observed a thinning of the ozone layer over Antarctica in the 1980s. This “ozone hole,” as it came to be known, caused considerable concern and spurred the leaders from several countries to come together in 1987 to sign the landmark Montreal Protocol – designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production and use of CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances.

As the EPA and its international partners prepare to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Montreal Protocol in September 2007, they are widely credited with stopping the further thinning of the ozone layer. While experts caution that sustained recovery of the ozone layer will require worldwide phase-out of ozone-depleting substances, research shows that the ozone layer over most of the world has not grown thinner since 1998 and appears to be recovering due to reduced emissions of ozone-depleting substances.

The EPA projects that by the year 2165, actions to protect and restore the ozone layer will save an estimated 6.3 million U.S. lives that would have otherwise been lost to skin cancer. For more information on the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, visit the EPA’s website at www.epa.gov/ozone/2007stratozoneprogressreport.html.

May 7 is Melanoma Monday[®] and the official launch of Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month[®]. For more information about skin cancer, please visit www.skincarephysicians.com and click on “SkinCancerNet.”

The American Academy of Dermatology (Academy), founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 15,000 physicians worldwide, the Academy is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the Academy at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or www.aad.org.

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