

# OZONews

A weekly electronic news service on ozone protection & implementation of the Montreal Protocol compiled by:  
UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, Paris

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### **1. Protecting Children from Ultraviolet Radiation**

Children are in a dynamic state of growth and are therefore more susceptible to environmental threats than adults. Many vital functions such as the immune system are not fully developed at birth, and unsafe environments may interfere with their normal development. But most environmental hazards are preventable: reducing exposure is the most effective way of protecting children's health... **Ultraviolet radiation and ozone depletion** Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is one component of solar radiation. It is progressively filtered as sunlight passes through the atmosphere, in particular by the ozone layer...As the ozone layer is depleted, the protective filter activity of the atmosphere is reduced and more UV radiation, in particular the more harmful UVB, reaches the Earth's surface. In the year 2000, the ozone hole over the Antarctic reached its biggest size ever covering 11.4 million square miles - an area more than three times the size of the United States. For the first time it also stretched over populated areas exposing local residents to extreme levels of solar UV radiation. Local authorities warned residents in Southern Chile that they could sunburn in less than seven minutes and should avoid spending time outdoors in the middle of the day...Sustained ozone depletion and enhanced levels of UV radiation on Earth will aggravate UV effects on the human skin, eyes and immune system. Children are at especially high risk of suffering damage from exposure to UV radiation...

**Children require special protection** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children, including all developmental stages from conception to age 18, have the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to a safe environment. Children require special protection as they are at a higher risk of suffering damage from exposure to UV radiation than adults, in particular...

**Full Text @:** <http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact261.html>

**Source:** World Health Organization, Fact Sheet No. 261, July 2001

### **2. Scientists Warn of Teflon Danger**

IT was one of the most celebrated spin-offs from the moon exploration programme - now the non-stick frying pan is threatening the earth. Scientists claim that heat is breaking Teflon down into chemical components, including the banned CFCs that punched a hole in the ozone layer. Teflon, or polytetrafluorethylene (PTFE), the coating used in non-stick frying pans, and similar compounds, degrade to produce potentially toxic chemicals, Canadian researchers claim today in the journal Nature. If their charges stick, they call into question continued use of such chemicals, whose long-term environmental effects are unknown. Some breakdown products have a half-life of 2000 years. Teflon and other fluorinated polymers are used in ovens, non-stick cooking utensils and combustion engines - yet heating creates a cocktail of breakdown chemicals, according to Scott Mabury and his colleagues at the University of Toronto.

Among those they detected in laboratory experiments were the highly persistent compounds trifluoroacetate (TFA), which is mildly toxic to plants, longer-chain perfluorocarboxylates, which accumulate in animal tissues, plus small quantities of ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). With limited knowledge of their lasting effects, their continued use could become an issue. "We're using compounds that will persist in the environment for very long periods of time," says Mr Mabury.

**Source:** The Herald, (Glasgow, UK), 19 July 2001, By: Alan MacDERMID

**@:** <http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/archive/19-7-19101-1-25-24.html>

### **3. Change of Web Address for OzonAction Programme Site**

The UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme recently launched its redesigned website with a new graphical interface and reorganised content for ease of navigation. The site contains a "one stop shop" for OzonAction publications, on-line versions of the OzonAction newsletter, links to key ozone protection resources as well as the RUMBA and CLIO3 news services and discussion forums. Please note the changed web address: [www.uneptie.org/ozonaction](http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction)

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United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics (UNEP DTIE) OzonAction Programme provides OzoNews as a free service to help keep readers informed about current news relating to ozone depletion and the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The goal of OzoNews is to provide information, stimulate discussion and promote cooperation in support of compliance with the Montreal Protocol. With the exception of items written by UNEP and occasional contributions solicited from other organizations, the news is sourced from on-line newspapers, journals and websites. The views expressed in articles written by external authors are solely the viewpoints of those authors and do not represent the policy or viewpoint of UNEP. While UNEP strives to avoid inclusion of misleading or inaccurate information, it is ultimately the responsibility of the reader to evaluate the accuracy of any news article in OzoNews. The citing of commercial technologies, products or services does not constitute endorsement of those items by UNEP.

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