



## Seven Asthma/COPD Inhalers to be Phased Out

On April 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [announced](#) the phase out over the next few years of certain kinds of inhaled medications used to treat asthma and COPD. Seven metered-dose inhalers (MDI) used to treat asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) will be gradually removed from the U.S. marketplace. Four of the seven CFC inhalers are no longer being made. Three CFC inhalers currently in use—Aerobid, Combivent, and Maxair—will be phased out over the next one to three years. These inhalers contain ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are propellants that move medication out of the inhaler and into the lungs of patients. Alternative medications that do not contain CFCs are available.

During this transition, the American Lung Association wants to ensure that patients have access to safe and effective alternative medications to treat their asthma or COPD. The Lung Association is encouraging all people with asthma or COPD who use these inhalers to talk to their health care professional about switching to one of several alternative treatments currently available. Until then, patients should continue using their current inhaler medication.

CFCs are harmful because they deplete the ozone layer miles above the Earth that absorb some of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. The United States has banned the general use of CFCs in consumer aerosols for decades, and eliminated the production of CFCs in the United States as of Jan. 1, 1996, except for certain limited uses, such as MDIs.

The CFC phase out is part of an international agreement to ban substances that deplete the Earth's ozone layer. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the U.S. Clean Air Act aim to protect the public health and the environment from the potentially negative effects of ozone depletion. Bans on products containing CFCs began in the late 1970s.

In order to help patients with asthma or COPD talk to their health professionals and make a plan for managing their lung disease, the American Lung Association is providing its Asthma Action Plan and COPD Action Plan that can be printed and taken to the doctor's office to make a plan for transition.