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## National Poison Prevention Week, 1986

*By the President of the United States of America*

### A Proclamation

March 16–22, 1986, will mark the 25th observance of National Poison Prevention Week. During the past quarter-century, there has been a remarkable reduction in childhood poisonings. In 1961, when Congress passed the law authorizing this annual proclamation, some 450 children under five years of age were killed each year in poisoning accidents. By 1983 (the last year for which we have complete statistics), the annual death toll for children under five had dropped to 55—an 88% reduction. Some of this improvement can be attributed to the use of child-resistant packaging, while another contributing factor is increased public awareness of the need to keep medicines and household chemicals out of the reach of children.

For the past 25 years, the Poison Prevention Week Council has coordinated a network of health, safety, business, and voluntary organizations in an effort to raise public awareness and to observe National Poison Prevention Week. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, which serves as the secretariat for the Poison Prevention Week Council, administers the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. This Act requires that 16 categories of hazardous household products, including prescription drugs, must be sold in child-resistant, safety packaging. Over the past two and a half decades, poison prevention programs have been implemented at the local level by poison control centers, safety councils, pharmacies, departments of health, hospitals, and many others. All of these organizations deserve great credit for a quarter of a century of success in raising public awareness of poison prevention and in sharply reducing the annual death toll.

We must continue to emphasize the need for poison prevention. Since children are particularly liable to accidental poisoning, their guardians should be informed of the need to use child-resistant packaging and to keep potential poisons out of the reach of children.

To encourage the American people to learn about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take preventive measures, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), authorizes and requests the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March in each year as National Poison Prevention Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning March 16, 1986, as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate observances and programs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

*Ronald Reagan*