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National Poison Prevention Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In the 27 years our Nation has observed National Poison Prevention Week, thousands of children under age five have been saved from accidental poisonings thanks to greater public awareness of poison prevention and the use of child-resistant bottle and container closures. This success story is due to the combined efforts of consumers, health professionals, and government and industry. All these groups are represented on the Poison Prevention Week Council. Through the annual observance of National Poison Prevention Week, parents have been urged to keep household chemicals and medicines out of the reach of young children. Poison control centers have helped save lives by offering emergency advice to consumers who call when a poisoning occurs. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has required that potentially hazardous household chemicals and medicines be packaged with effective child-resistant closures.

Data recently compiled by CPSC show that the number of child poisonings has decreased since child-resistant packaging began to be used. In 1972, when the first drugs were required to have child-resistant packaging, 96 children died from accidental drug ingestion. By 1974, the first year in which child-resistant packaging was required for most prescription drugs, there were 57 fatalities. In subsequent years, other products were required to have child-resistant packaging, and the number of deaths due to ingestion of these drugs continued to decline. In 1984, the last full year for which we have received information on drug ingestion fatalities, there were 31 deaths.

Child-resistant packaging has saved many lives, but there is more to do. We must remind new parents and grandparents of the need to keep medicines and household chemicals out of the reach of children. Underlying our poison prevention program is the assumption that virtually all childhood poisonings are preventable.

To encourage the American people to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take more preventive measures, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March of 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 20, 1988, as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies and events and by learning how to prevent childhood poisonings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan