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National Poison Prevention Week, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Childhood poisonings continue to pose a major public health problem in the United States. Each year, more than 100,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms because they accidentally ingested chemical household products.

For the past 23 years, the Poison Prevention Week Council has coordinated a network of organizations which seek to raise public awareness of the importance of preventing childhood poisonings. Working together as sponsors of National Poison Prevention Week are national medical, pharmacy, nursing, dental, and hospital associations; health and safety groups; organizations representing manufacturers, packagers, and distributors of consumer products, including medicines; the media; and government agencies. Most of these groups have State and local chapters and affiliates that, along with community organizations, are the backbone of what has become a successful nationwide poison prevention program.

In recent years, the number of poisonings among children has fallen dramatically for those substances that have been required to be packaged in child-resistant closures. However, despite these successes, many childhood poisonings continue to occur. Some adults purchase regulated products in conventional rather than child-resistant packaging or, alternatively, defeat the child-resistant packaging. In addition, adults who are using potentially poisonous products sometimes are distracted for a moment by a telephone call, a doorbell, or food cooking on the stove. These seemingly innocuous distractions can have disastrous consequences if a child ingests the poisonous product. The theme of National Poison Prevention Week is "Children Act Fast . . . So Do Poisons," and this theme emphasizes how important it is that adults never leave potential poisons unattended.

To assist in encouraging the American people to learn of the dangers of accidental poisoning and to take appropriate preventive measures, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating the third week in March as National Poison Prevention Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning March 18, 1984, as National Poison Prevention Week.

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

Ronald Reagan