

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 18, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK, 1976

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

The life of a child is precious. The loss of even one child is tragic. Yet each year accidental poisonings cause too many of our Nation's children to suffer illness and injury from which they may never recover.

As every parent knows, children are by nature inquisitive. They are explorers and experimenters. It is our responsibility not only to teach them the dangers that poisonous substances present, but to provide them with a safe environment. Special packaging required under the provisions of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 plays a major role in achieving this aim. Data recently released by the National Center for Health Statistics indicate that in the year since aspirin products were first required to be kept in safety packaging, the number of deaths among children under five from aspirin poisoning declined 48 percent.

While these developments are encouraging, they provide no excuse for a relaxation of concern or vigilance. During 1974, over 200,000 accidental ingestions of household substances were reported by poison control centers throughout the country. Approximately 130,000 involved children under five years of age. But these reports may represent only a fraction of the actual number of toxic episodes. Medical authorities estimate that each year 600,000 to one million children accidentally swallow substances which may be harmful -- or even deadly.

Recognizing the need to encourage all Americans to take preventive measures to eliminate accidental poisonings and their tragic toll, the Congress, by joint resolution of September 26, 1961 (36 U.S.C. 165), has requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating the third week in March as National Poison Prevention Week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning March 21, 1976, as National Poison Prevention Week. I urge all Americans to provide safety for our Nation's youngsters by storing, using, and handling household substances with care. I invite all organizations concerned with preventing accidental poisoning among children to join in activities that will assist in protecting all our children from these dangers.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

#