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Consumer Product Safety Commission

Child-Resistant Closures and Veterinary Drugs Dispensed by Veterinarians to the Consumer

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The magnitude of the potential "veterinary drug" problem is evident from Information published in the March 1986 Issue of Pharmacy Times, which noted that today in the U.S. there are about 36 million households that own at least one dog; 24 million households with at least one cat; and 15 million households owning (in decreasing order of frequency) fish, birds, rodents, and reptiles.

The American Veterinary Medical Association has long been on record as favoring the use of child-resistant packaging by dispensing veterinarians. At the 1986 Winter Meeting of the AVMA's Council on Therapeutic and Biological Drugs, the **Council reaffirmed its previous position calling for the voluntary use of child-resistant packaging by veterinarians when dispensing veterinary drugs.**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission strongly supports this recommendation. **The Commission urges all veterinary medical practitioners to adopt the practice of routinely using child-resistant packaging, particularly when dispensing some of the more toxic agents available for veterinary use.**

Early attempts to reduce accidental poisonings by household substances relied on labeling of hazardous substances and efforts to educate parents about the hazards associated with the use and

A manufacturer of a non-prescription product regulated under the PPPA may market a single size of that product in a conventional package, provided that the package is labeled to indicate that it is for households without young children and provided that the manufacturer also markets the product in packages which comply with the regulation. On the other hand, those regulated substances which may be sold only on the order of a licensed medical practitioner must be dispensed in child-resistant (CR) packaging unless requested otherwise by the purchaser or the prescribing medical practitioner.

Therefore, unless requested otherwise, human oral prescription drugs are required to be in child-resistant packaging when they are dispensed by pharmacists. However, veterinary prescription drugs, which are often both prescribed and dispensed by veterinarians, are not required to be in child-resistant packaging.

In studies by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, a number of facts were revealed about veterinary prescription drugs and their dispensing patterns:

- The majority of veterinary drugs prescribed for small animals were generic equivalents of orally administered human prescription drugs.

- Approximately 95 percent of all veterinary drug prescriptions were for small animals

storage of hazardous substances in the home. These efforts prevented many accidents; however, they were only partially effective for the most frequently involved group, children under the age of five.

The Poison Prevention Packaging Act (PPPA) of 1970, authorizes the establishment of mandatory safety packaging standards for categories of products which, because of the nature of the hazard to children, require child-resistant packaging to prevent death or serious injury or illness in children under the age of five.

Sixteen categories of substances have been regulated to date. These include caustics such as sodium and/or potassium hydroxide drain cleaners, various petroleum distillate-containing household cleaning products, solvents and fuels, several over-the-counter drugs, and oral human prescription drugs as well as controlled drugs.

kept in or around the home.

-A high percentage of veterinary drugs (more than 90 percent) are dispensed by veterinarians, the balance (generally controlled drugs) are dispensed by pharmacists.

Many toxic prescription drugs are consequently available in the home in conventional packaging when prescribed for the family pet, while they would be in protective safety packaging when prescribed for a family member. While not all prescription drugs are so classed on the basis of toxicity, a potential for childhood injury exists anytime one of the more toxic prescription items enters the home in a non-safety package. **Therefore, CPSC urges all veterinary medical practitioners to use child-resistant packaging.** For more Information about the Poison Prevention Packaging Act and child-resistant packaging, call the U S Consumer Product Safety Commission at the toll-free hotline number shown below.

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To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (301) 595-7054, or visit CPSC's web site at www.cpsc.gov/talk.html. To join a CPSC email subscription list, please go to <https://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx>. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.



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