



National Check-Up Week, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Many of the leading causes of death and disability in the United States are diseases that could be treated effectively—if detected early. That is why periodic medical examinations are important for all Americans.

Heart disease, which claims the lives of more than 500,000 Americans each year and represents the leading cause of death in our country, can be reduced in severity or even prevented through such measures as the control of high blood pressure and the maintenance of a healthy diet. In fact, improved treatment for high blood pressure has reduced the frequency of strokes in the United States to one-half the rate recorded during the early 1970's. The first step in identifying and treating such a health risk as high blood pressure is often a routine medical check-up.

Similarly, medical science has shown that the early detection of some forms of cancer—long before symptoms develop—can save lives. For example, deaths in this country from cancer of the cervix have fallen dramatically since 1950, due, in part, to routine screening tests performed by doctors. The prognosis for victims of other forms of cancer, such as breast cancer, can also be improved when the disease is detected early through periodic medical check-ups.

In addition to the early detection of illness, regular medical check-ups play an important role in disease prevention. For example, highly effective vaccines administered to young children have led to the virtual elimination of certain childhood diseases, such as polio, that were common afflictions only one generation ago.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that many diseases and other health problems can be prevented simply through changes in personal behavior. Refraining from smoking, improving one's diet, safe sexual practices, and avoidance of drug and alcohol abuse are some of the many measures that can help reduce one's risk of illness and injury. The medical check-up provides an important opportunity for the doctor and patient to discuss these behaviors. It is an ideal setting for the physician to assess the individual risk profile of each patient and to provide him or her with useful health care information. It also allows the physician and patient to work together in developing an effective health care regimen that can be applied at home and at work, long after the visit is over. Periodic check-ups strengthen the doctor-patient relationship and allow physicians to monitor carefully their patients' health.

To recognize the importance of periodic medical check-ups, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 95, has designated the week beginning September 10, 1989, as "National Check-Up Week," and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this occasion.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of September 10, 1989, as "National Check-Up Week." I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

George Bush