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**(54) Title:** CHILD-RESISTANT PACKAGE HAVING PRELOADED LOCKING MECHANISM**(57) Abstract**

A package for storing and dispensing potentially dangerous materials, such as medicament tablets or the like, said package being resistant to opening by children but readily openable by adults, particularly adults having impaired manual dexterity of their hands and/or fingers. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the package comprises a bottle (12), a collar (32) which is secured in place over the uppermost portion of the bottle (12) and a closure (52) which is secured to the finish portion of the bottle by means of complementary screw threads. The collar (32) preferably includes a pair of resiliently deformable spring-like pushtabs (34) containing vertical extensions (36) which engage interlocking teeth (62) on the innermost surface of the closure skirt (60) when the closure (52) is fully assembled onto the bottle (12). To remove the closure (52), the opposed pushtabs (34) must be manually depressed prior to applying unscrewing torque to the closure (52) to disengage the pushtab extensions (36) from the interlocking teeth (62) on the closure (52). In a particularly preferred embodiment, the spring-like pushtabs (34) are generally outwardly directed prior to application of the closure to the package. Advancing the closure (52) onto the package until the teeth (62) on the innermost surface of the closure's skirt (60) interlock with the vertical extensions (36) of the spring-like pushtabs (34) causes a degree of resilient deformation of the spring-like pushtabs (34) so that the vertical extensions (36) of the pushtabs (34) are in contact with and exert a preloading force against the corresponding innermost surfaces of the closure skirt once the closure has been securely applied to the package. Quite unexpectedly, it has been learned that preloading the vertical extensions of the resiliently deformable spring-like pushtabs against the corresponding innermost surfaces of the closure skirt in the foregoing manner considerably enhances the child resistance of the package without increasing the difficulty of opening for older adults or those having impaired manual dexterity. Methods for producing the improved package are also disclosed.

