

Media statement

17 December 2019

Spend time with family this Christmas, not emergency department staff

“We don’t want to meet you at work this festive season, but we will be here if you need us!”

That’s the message from Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) as staff prepare for a busy holiday period in its emergency departments.

SCHHS operates emergency departments at Sunshine Coast University Hospital, Nambour General Hospital, Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital and Gympie Hospital, all open 24 hours, seven days a week.

Nambour General Hospital Emergency Department Clinical Director, Dr Dan Bitmead said his emergency team saw many patients whose festive season was ruined by injury, road trauma and overindulgence.

“Our highly skilled team of doctors and nurses is committed to providing clinical excellence to all of our patients,” Dr Bitmead said.

The daily average number of patient presentations to our emergency departments through the 18/19 year was 427. This compares with 560 presentations on Boxing Day 2018, 540 presentations on New Year’s Eve 2018 and 574 on New Year’s Day 2019 - making these three festive days very busy.

“The most common diagnoses in our emergency departments during the Christmas-New Year period last year were viral infections, chest pain, gastroenteritis, urinary tract infection and minor head injury,” Dr Bitmead said.

He said the figures spoke for themselves and urged people to take care over the holidays.

“The holiday period is a time to enjoy the company of family and friends. We hope that people drink responsibly, appoint a designated driver and take care of each other,” he said.

“Emergency departments are busy places and patients are attended to and treated according to how urgent their condition is. For example, patients with trauma injuries from a road accident or those with severe illnesses will take priority over more minor complaints.”

Please remember:

- In an emergency call Triple Zero (000) and ask for an ambulance. Once the paramedics arrive they will decide on your care. This may include taking you to the nearest emergency department or treating you at the scene. You may be asked to see your general practitioner for any follow-up treatment.
- If it’s not an emergency, call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84). Qualified staff are available 24 hours a day. They will advise you on what to do and whether you need to go to a G.P., pharmacy or an emergency department.

Sunshine Coast

Hospital and Health Service

Media statement

- G.P.s can treat many conditions you might otherwise go to an emergency department for, such as removing stitches, managing sprains and strains, and some bites and stings.
- If your G.P. is not available you can visit the Minor Injury and Illness Clinic at Caloundra Health Service, West Terrace, Caloundra, without an appointment. Open 9.00am to 9.00pm, seven days a week.

ENDS

Media contact: Alicia Temple | Alexia Kelly 5202 0083 | 0408 713 747

Follow us!  