

## Media statement

29 November 2019

### Put safety first this silly season

Falls are a common cause for injury during the silly season and locals are being urged to stay safe this festive season.

Dr Ben Close Emergency Medicine Director Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service said many people didn't realise the potential hazards that came about at Christmas time and were often too busy or distracted to ensure they were keeping themselves safe.

"By taking note of potential risks and being aware of your environment, you can avoid injury to yourself or your loved ones this Christmas," Dr Close said.

In December 2018, 551 people presented to Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service Emergency Departments for falls-related injuries, and in January 2019, that figure rose to 609.

"Christmas-related injuries are very common over the festive period, as a result of falling from a ladder, table or whatever else is being used to decorate Christmas trees," Dr Close said.

"We also see people falling while using ladders incorrectly. It is important to make sure there is always someone else at home when using a ladder, and never have more than one person on a ladder at a time."

"Cables and decorations should be out of the way as they are potential trip hazards. These can be Christmas light cables, Christmas decorations, presents or anything else that clutters up a space, especially if there will be more people present in the space than usual."

And while it is the season to be merry, locals are also being urged to drink responsibly, and avoid doing physical activities while intoxicated.

"We often treat patients injured after alcohol has impaired their judgement. They do things they may not do in a more sober frame of mind and can end up injured," Dr Close said.

Dr Close also encouraged parents to think carefully before attempting to use toys they had given their children.

"If it's been a few years since you've attempted to ride a skate board, or another highly physical activity, it's probably best avoided," he said.

**ENDS**

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