

12th December 2014

Avoid the Liverpool Emergency Department this summer

Doctors are urging Liverpool residents to play it safe these summer holidays to help prevent trips to the Emergency Department during what can be its busiest period of the year.

Last summer Liverpool Hospital's Emergency Department saw an average of 197 patients a day in December and 194 in January.

Just one month after the summer holidays in February, the average number of admissions a day dropped to 172.

Emergency Department Director Dr Ian Ferguson said the summer holidays can be one of the busiest times of the year, but simple precautions can prevent complicated health accidents.

"We usually hit our record number of presentations on or around Boxing Day or New Year's Day – last year during that period we reached 267 presentations the day after Boxing Day.

"We have one of the busiest Emergency Departments in the state, and our dedicated staff work hard to ensure patients receive the best care they can get," he said.

"But still, a visit to the ED is not really what anyone wants for their families over the holiday break."

Dr Ferguson said new toys, too much alcohol, or even Christmas decorations can result in an unwanted visit to the ED.

"Too much alcohol can make common, slightly hazardous activities even more hazardous," he said.

"After too many drinks, activities like swimming, climbing a ladder or tree or even riding a bicycle can land someone in trouble and in the Emergency Department.

"Make sure new active toys like skateboards and bikes also come with helmets and protective gear, and make an effort to teach children how to use equipment safely and properly to avoid accidents and broken bones.

"When it comes to decorations, tree ornaments, light bulbs, tinsel and small toys act like magnets to small children but they are all potential choking hazards so they need to be kept away or secured at all times.

"Many toddlers also can't resist the urge to touch and pull on the Christmas tree yet one determined tug can send it crashing down on them in seconds if it is not secured in its stand, or to the wall or ceiling.

"It only takes a little time to be safe and ensure that the whole family has a memorable and happy Christmas and New Year," Dr Ferguson said.

Dr Ferguson said people seeking non-urgent care should first contact their GP, or phone Health Direct on 1800 022 222 to speak with a registered nurse who may be able to offer advice and health information.