

■ Safe-sex warnings ignored ■ Morning-after pill sales spike ■ Risky balcony-hopping

WELCOME TO FOOLIES

**JEREMY PIERCE
BRITTANY VONOW**

HEALTH officials have warned of an STD epidemic among schoolies as sales of the morning-after pill spike following the first weekend of celebrations.

While high-rise balcony high jinks, alcohol-fuelled violence and drug abuse are regular concerns, the rising threat of STDs has emerged as yet another risk.

Schoolies week used to be one of the busiest weeks of the year for Gold Coast chemists selling condoms - but no longer.

Instead, this year Surfers Paradise pharmacies have reported an increase in the sale of the morning-after pills.

Two 17-year-old schoolies, who did not want to be identified, yesterday said condoms were part of their luggage.

"We've got some in our bag upstairs," said one. "I should probably keep one in my wallet, but you don't want to jinx yourself. It's not at the top of my mind because you've got to pick up first."

The national rate of chlamydia has more than tripled in the past decade with nearly 80,000 infections reported in 2011, up from 17,000 in 2001.

Monash IVF senior fertility specialist Dr Kee Ong said reckless sexual behaviour exposed youths to the very real threat of STDs, such as chlamydia, which can seriously affect fertility.

"I know the last thing these schoolies are thinking about is STDs and their future fertility but this is a very real and serious health issue," he said.

Dr Ong said an entire generation had forgot the safe sex mantra of the 1990s.

"The fear of HIV and AIDS really got people thinking," he said. "The safe sex message is increasingly falling on deaf ears and we need to act now to avoid a potential fertility crisis."



WAKE UP CALL: Two schoolies embrace at dawn yesterday.



Dicing with death as revellers ignore railing stunt warnings

SCHOOLIES have been dicing with death, leaping between balconies high above the ground.

Two schoolies have so far been evicted from their hotel and others will be booted out if caught balcony hopping, the festival's senior cop has warned.

But repeated warnings have been ignored just two days into the week that has drawn tens of thousands of school leavers to the Gold Coast. Late yesterday, a young girl was seen climbing over the railing of her ninth-storey hotel balcony

at The Islander (pictured below).

After sharing a beer with schoolies in a next door apartment, she climbed over the railing and jumped the metre-wide gap to the apartment next door. She was later followed by other schoolies (left).

The security manager tried to stop the balcony hopping but the teens ignored repeated warnings.

Police Superintendent Des Lacey said balcony hoppers would face immediate eviction if caught in the act. "It is not on," he said.

JACINDA TUTTY

