

17 December 2019

Skip the queue this summer with healthdirect mobile app

Parents are being encouraged to skip the queue at the emergency department this summer by downloading and using an innovative app to find the most appropriate medical care closest to them and their children.

healthdirect is a free mobile application developed by the Department of Health, designed to connect users with clinically accurate and relevant health information, along with a place to check symptoms, look up common medicines and find health services.

Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN Health Systems Improvement Manager Deidre Ballinger says healthdirect's location settings means you can use it anywhere, including when you are on holidays, to find a health service when and where you need it.

"We are encouraging parents to download the healthdirect app during the Christmas break, which is a time when families typically travel," Ms Ballinger said

"As a parent, I understand the stress of having a sick child, which is exacerbated when you're out of your usual routine and in an unfamiliar environment.

"The service finder is a way of saving parents from spending hours waiting with a sick child in a hospital or an emergency department waiting room when a GP nearby can help."

Downloaded onto a digital device, the healthdirect app is easy to navigate, with users also able to apply a variety of filters to search for options like free parking, disability and/or wheelchair access, and opening hours.

Buderim GP Dr Jon Harper said the healthdirect app is a particularly good resource for parents overwhelmed by the volume of information available on the internet, which might not always be accurate or relevant to our healthcare system.

"Millions of people search the internet for health and medical information each week in Australia, and it's estimated more than three quarters of these visits land on overseas websites where there is no guarantee the information is reliable," Dr Harper said.

"The healthdirect app has undergone a strict quality assurance process for accuracy and relevancy, and users can be confident the information they enter into the symptom checker, either for themselves or on behalf of someone else, will connect them with the right pathway to care.

"Connecting people, particularly at Christmas time, with the most appropriate level of medical care can reduce stressful and unnecessary visits to hospital emergency departments and ultimately buy you more time doing the things you want to be doing during the summer break."

Don't spend your holiday in a hospital waiting room. Search for healthdirect on either the iPhone or Android app store and download the free app today.

A desktop version of the healthdirect app is also available, simply by visiting healthdirect.gov.au

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