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For immediate release

Australians urged to be alert to their health during the holidays

Mid-year school holidays often signal an exodus of Australian families heading to a favourite camping or fishing spot, the snow or to beat the winter's chill in warmer climates.

Australia Medic Alert Foundation, chief executive officer, Ms Sandra Turner, urges Australians to add their health needs to their pre-holiday checklist.

"While an unexpected illness or accident is the last thing on travellers' minds, existing medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, asthma or allergies don't take a break because you are on holidays," Ms Turner cautioned.

"Leaving usual medication at home, changes in temperature, diet and activity levels and exposure to different allergens or stinging insects can trigger a sudden medical emergency.

"Quickly identifying a patient's underlying medical conditions can be vital to their survival in an emergency, particularly for children, whether visiting friends or relatives, playing in a caravan park or exploring new surroundings," she said.

Around six per cent of the Foundation's new members across Australia this year are children aged up to five years, with more than eight per cent aged between 6 and 12.

The MedicAlert® emblem worn around the neck or wrist is instantly recognised by emergency personnel and healthcare professionals across Australia and many other countries. They can immediately check for key medical conditions and medications engraved on the back of the emblem.

As part of the MedicAlert® system, health professionals can also access extra emergency information by calling the 24/7 toll-free hotline number also engraved on the emblem.

The Australian Government's travel advisory information service, *Smartraveller*, advises those with a pre-existing medical condition to consider wearing a MedicAlert® emblem when travelling overseas.

"Whether holidaying at home or away, wearing an individually engraved MedicAlert® emblem gives families peace of mind that emergency personnel will always have access to vital medical information when seconds can count," Ms Turner said.

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For more information or for comment, please contact:

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Australia Medic Alert Foundation is a non-profit organisation serving Australians since 1971 by providing a 24-hour personal medical emergency information and identification system. The authentic individually engraved MedicAlert® emblem is instantly recognised by medical personnel in many countries and provides immediate access to important medical information that can be vital in an emergency.

Australia Medic Alert Foundation

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