

# Schools, uni hot spot for chlamydia

A GOLD Coast fertility specialist has labelled the city's schools and universities "breeding grounds for chlamydia" and fears young people are setting themselves up for fertility problems in the future.

Monash IVF senior fertility specialist Kee Ong said the rate of chlamydia notifications had more than tripled in the past decade, with a 50 per cent increase among females.

"Young people aged 15 to 29 years account for over 80 per cent of cases and our schools and universities have become a breeding ground for chlamydia," he said.

Chlamydia, known as a silent disease due to its lack of symptoms, can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease – an infection of the female reproductive organs.

With Schoolies about to descend on the Gold Coast, Dr Ong said it was vital young people realised the devastating effects unprotected sex could have on their future.

"It's hard to tell young people to worry about their fertility because they aren't concerned about that now," he said.

"The ability to repair tubal

damage is very poor and the difficult IVF journey will be the only option for these young women down the track."

Gold Coast Medical Association president Gary Swift agreed, saying one case of chlamydia could drastically impact a woman's fertility.

"Each time you get chlamydia it reduces your fertility by 30 per cent, so if you get it more than three times there is a high chance you will be infertile," he said.

And with Schoolies approaching, Dr Swift had one message for school leavers: "Condoms, condoms, condoms."

Crimestoppers CEO Trevor O'Hara said the organisation's Schoolies Support Team would be issued with condoms to give to schoolies upon request.

Gold Coast Sexual Health Service director Maree O'Sullivan said schoolies could also make use of the clinic's "pee and flee" service.

"It is a system whereby people who want a screening test for chlamydia can come in for free and without an appointment, do a quick Q&A, pee in a jar and leave and we then text them the results," she said.

## Are you hot to trot a lap of the GC600?



Hayley Bateup with surf lifesaving members Tamika Gillett and Brooke Ward.

Photo: JERAD WILLIAMS

REVHEADS might have to take it down a gear if they sign up for the Runner's Hot Lap.

Rather than screaming around the Gold Coast 600 track in fast cars, the event offers people the chance to see the route at a much slower pace.

For the first time the course will be opened up to 1000 super-

charged runners. Joined by Gold Coast athletes Hayley Bateup and Mat Rogers, any person able to run 3km in under 30 minutes can enter the event.

"I reckon it will be awesome – I haven't run 3km in a long time," said Ms Bateup.

"I always come to the GC600 and watch the cars go round, so it

will be pretty cool to get out there and run around the track.

"Hopefully there will be lots of people on the day cheering us on," she said.

Entry costs \$10, and all proceeds will be donated directly to SLSQ.

Registrations for the Runner's Hot Lap are open now through runnershotlap.com.au

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