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Floods and storms pose deadly risk

Queenslanders who venture into floodwaters and buildings damaged by severe weather could be putting their lives at risk, doctors have warned.

AMA Queensland Vice President Dr Bill Boyd said flooding and storm damage posed several major health threats - especially for children.

"Parents must supervise their children closely, as they simply don't understand the risks they face," Dr Boyd said.

"Kids want to play in water but, if they get sucked into a drain and trapped, they could die."

Dr Boyd referenced the recent death of a young boy, who drowned after being sucked into a stormwater drain, as a shocking consequence of taking such risks.

"Drowning is not the only danger to consider," he said.

"There is a high risk of serious injury and disease for those who are unprepared for flood and storm conditions and their aftermath."

Floodwaters will often be contaminated by sewage or waste from bins, increasing the risk of infection from water-borne diseases.

This risk will be higher if people suffer scratches or cuts while in the water, often from vegetation or nails in debris.

"Don't go into flood water or clean-up wearing thongs, shorts and a t-shirt," Dr Boyd said.

"Tetanus is a real danger and it can kill – to help prevent infection you should wear protective clothes, glasses and boots."

Fallen powerlines, damaged buildings, emergency vehicles and generator cables pose another hazard, especially to unsupervised children.

Households which lose power should be cautious about consuming dairy products and thawed foods, especially meat and prepared meals.

"If in doubt, throw it out," Dr Boyd said.

Adults stuck at home may also be tempted to drink alcohol but should exercise caution.

"At times like this, people need to keep their wits about them. The risks are real so stay alert."

MEDIA CONTACT: Stuart Sherwin, Sequel PR – 0403 090 914 or 07 3251 8111

Chiara Lesèvre, AMA Queensland - 0419 735 641 or 07 3872 2209.