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Condom handouts for Schoolies revellers

SCHOOL leavers on the Gold Coast will be given free condoms to encourage safe sex and prevent sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies.

The Schoolies Week festivities began on the Gold Coast yesterday, with 40,000 leavers expected over the next 10 days.

Condoms will be provided by the sexual health group Marie Stopes Inter-

national, which says Australia has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and sex infections in the world.

"We have traditionally seen an increase in the number of people needing advice for unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections in the weeks following the Schoolies vacation," Marie Stopes CEO Suzanne Dvorak said.