

43% of Australian women are not screened for cervical cancer abnormalities as regularly as recommended. Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation (ACCF) recently conducted research with over 600 Australian women to determine what women want in relation to cervical screening. While it is assumed that all appropriate clinical guidelines will be followed, this Comfort Checklist aims to minimise emotional, cultural and physical barriers that prevent women from coming to be screened.

**FOR HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS/CLINICS**

Simple steps to ensure comfort:

Prepare the examination room:

- Provide curtains and sheets to drape for privacy.
- Prepare all medical equipment prior to the patient entering the room.
- Ensure speculum is at a comfortable temperature to ensure comfort (whether plastic or metal).

Ensure provision of the following:

- Be aware that each patient is an individual, offer the option for an additional support person to be present eg. nurse, friend or relative.
- Ensure privacy for the patient to undress and dress.
- Provide a sheet for draping across patient's stomach and thighs.
- Give the patient clear instructions and explanations during the procedure (in language that the layperson can understand). Also assure women that they can ask questions or request to stop during the procedure.

Completion:

- Offer further privacy to dress, provide tissues, sanitary pads etc and allow patient to wash hands – if needed
- Reassure patient if possible and appropriate, -that genitalia/reproductive organs appear normal (this is not referring to the test result).
- Tell patient clearly what your process is regarding results (Do you notify them? How & when? Or do they call you? For example; results will generally be expected within two weeks.) Encourage the patient to call to check results, should they be concerned.
- Abnormal results: Should a woman have abnormal results it can be concerning – ensure simple language is used and explain any technical terms. Perhaps suggest a support person be present during consultation.
- Ensure patient's contact details are up to date and suggest she signs up for the FREE reminder service; "Get the Text" at www.accf.org.au

Proudly developed by the ACCF Checklist Medical Panel and endorsed by the Australian Women's Health Network

For information about the Comfort Checklist please visit www.accf.org.au/cervical-health/prevention/comfort-checklist or call 1300 727 630 (within Australia) or (07) 3177 1099