

# Cervical Screening Comfort Checklist for Health Professionals

What women and people with  
a cervix want during cervical  
screening examinations



One third of Australians are not participating in cervical screening as frequently as recommended. The Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation (ACCF) has conducted research with over 1000 Australian women and people with a cervix to determine what they want in relation to cervical screening. While it is assumed that all appropriate clinical guidelines will be followed, this Comfort Checklist aims to minimise the emotional, cultural and physical barriers that prevent engagement in regular screening.

## Simple steps to ensure your comfort:

### Prepare the examination room:

- Provide curtains and sheets to drape for privacy.
- Prepare all medical equipment for the Cervical Screening Test prior to the patient entering the room.
- If being used, ensure the speculum is at a comfortable temperature (whether plastic or metal).

### For Cervical Screening Test:

- Provide an explanation of the Cervical Screening Test and offer the choice between a clinician-collected or self-collected sample.
- Be aware that each patient is an individual and may want an additional support person to be present (e.g. nurse, friend or relative).
- For those choosing self-collection:**
  - Provide a private space for the patient to collect their sample.
  - If requested, assist the patient to collect their sample.
- For those choosing clinician-collection:**
  - Provide privacy for the patient to undress.
  - Provide a sheet for draping across the patient's stomach and thighs.
  - Give the patient clear instructions and explanations during the procedure (in language that the layperson can understand).
  - Assure the patient that they can ask questions or request to stop during the procedure.

### After your test:

- Offer privacy to dress, and if needed provide tissues or sanitary pads and handwashing facilities.
- Answer any questions the patient may have regarding the test or their body.
- Tell the patient clearly what your process is regarding results (How and when do you notify them, or do they call you? For example, you will be contacted if there is any abnormality within two weeks.) Encourage the patient to call to check their results should they be concerned.
- Abnormal results: The mention of abnormal results can be concerning. Explain the process if abnormal results are found. Ensure simple language is used and explain any technical terms. In some cases, you might suggest a support person be present during the consultation.
- Ensure the patient's contact details are up to date.

For information about the Comfort Checklist please visit:  
[accf.org.au/cervical-screening](http://accf.org.au/cervical-screening)  
or call 1300 727 630 (within Australia) or (07) 3177 1099

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