

Alarm at Pap test worries Jamie First

Aussie women are risking their lives to prevent embarrassment.

Almost two in three said they avoided having a regular Pap test because they felt uncomfortable, according to a survey conducted by the Australian Cervical Cancer Foundation (ACCF).

Even more alarming, 43 per cent of females aged 18 to 69 opted not to have the procedure at all.

The majority of respondents said they would rather have a blood test (37 per cent), go to the dentist (19 per cent) or speak in public (16 per cent), than have the exam (12 per cent).

ACCF chief executive Joe Tooma said it's startling to read the statistics.

"Cervical cancer is a preventable disease if detected and treated early," he said.

"It's particularly concerning when we know around 90 per cent of women who die from cervical cancer have not had regular Pap tests."

The charity is urging women to sign up to "Get the Pap Text", a free SMS service that is sent to remind them of their biennial check.

People can also buy an orange gerbera or ribbon as part of the ACCF's Be Bright campaign to mark National Cervical Cancer Awareness Week (which runs until November 24).

Proceeds raised will go towards research and prevention of the illness.

For more information, visit accf.org.au or call 1300 727 630.