

# Media Release

SA Health

Friday 29 April 2016

## PAP AWARENESS WEEK 2016

In the lead up to Pap Awareness Week, from Sunday 1 May to Saturday 7 May 2016, SA Health is reminding women about the importance of getting regular Pap smears, to help prevent cervical cancer.

While the latest participation rates shows South Australia continues to have the second highest cervical screening rate in the country, with 59.4 per cent of women getting regular Pap smears, health authorities are urging more women to get regularly checked.

Regular Pap smears can prevent 90 per cent of cervical cancer. Pap smears detect any abnormal cell changes in the cervix, allowing them to be monitored and treated well before cancer develops.

If you are over 18 and have ever been sexually active, book your test today.

### Background

The SA Cervix Screening Program is a partner of the National Cervical Screening Program. It aims to reduce the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer among South Australian women.

Pap Awareness Week is an annual campaign in May that raises awareness of cervical cancer and its prevention through encouraging women to have regular Pap smears.

Recent data shows that since the 2007 introduction of the cervical cancer (Human Papillomavirus) vaccine, the numbers of young women returning abnormal Pap smear results has significantly declined.

However, women who have had the vaccine should continue to have regular Pap smears, as the vaccine does not cover all the HPVs that are associated with cervical cancer.

All women over the age of 18 who have ever been sexually active should have Pap smears every two years and continue until age 70.

For more information about the SA Cervix Screening Program or where to go for a Pap smear in your area call 13 15 56 or visit [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/papsmear](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/papsmear).

And don't forget to call the SA Cervical Screening Registry on 1800 901 112 to update your contact details if you move, to keep getting your reminder letters.

**Quotes to be attributed to Jodi Knoop, Women's Health Clinical Practice Consultant, Women's and Children's Health Network, SA Health**

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### For more information

Call the WCHN Media Line  
Telephone: 08 8161 7164 or 0401 125 630 after hours

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Pap smears are the most effective way to detect abnormal cell changes in the cervix, helping to prevent up to 90 per cent of cervical cancers.

Simply having one 15 minute test every two years can help to save so many lives so it's important we take the time to remind each other to make that appointment.

It's fantastic that South Australia continues to have such strong participation rates and we would like to improve these results further.

If you are unsure about your situation or when your next appointment is due, contact your local GP, health centre or call the SA Cervix Screening Program Registry on 1800 901 112.

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