

HEALTH REPORT

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SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE – IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

New research released today shows that embarrassment is stopping Australians from getting treatment for one of our nation's biggest killers – bowel cancer.

While nearly all Australians are aware of the warning signs of bowel cancer, fewer than 40 per cent of bowel cancers are detected early.

The survey reveals that 60 percent of Australians would hesitate to see a doctor due to embarrassment.

The research, published in the latest issue of the Pfizer Australia Health Report, was conducted by Stollznow Research for The Gut Foundation and researched-based medicines company, Pfizer Australia.

"Australians need to realise that there is no shame in seeking treatment for a potentially preventable disease," said Professor Terry Bolin, President of The Gut Foundation

"Bowel cancer is the most common internal cancer in men and women and accounts for one death every two hours.

"Swallowing your pride and overcoming feelings of embarrassment could essentially save your life."

According to The Gut Foundation, bowel cancer is the only preventable cancer in men and women (along with cervical cancer), so screening and early diagnosis is crucial.

"The sooner bowel cancer is diagnosed, the better the outcome. We recommend people as young as 40 start screening for bowel cancer as around one-in-10 cancers occur under the age of 50," Professor Bolin said.

A balanced diet is known to assist in the prevention of bowel cancer, however the survey shows that Australians are confused about what constitutes a healthy diet.

A key finding is that Australians are divided on the best sources of fibre – an important part of a balanced diet.



Around half of those surveyed correctly consider pumpkin seeds, corn on the cob, peas, raisins, sultanas and many cereals to be high in fibre while incorrectly believing that salad is high in fibre.

Australians are also confused about which drinks contain caffeine - an irritant to the bowel.

More than half of Australians do not realise that tea contains caffeine and around the same amount mistakenly think that chocolate contains caffeine.

In addition to following a balanced diet, The Gut Foundation recommends regular exercise, limiting alcohol intake and avoiding cigarettes to assist in the prevention of bowel cancer.

"Mortality from bowel cancer patients has not changed substantially over the past 20 years. We can make a difference by improving awareness of symptoms, encouraging early diagnosis, and creating awareness of the benefits of surgery for early cancer," said Professor Bolin.

To assist with educating the public about bowel cancer, The Gut Foundation has collaborated with Pfizer Australia to produce this month's edition of the Pfizer Australia Health Report. Filled with useful information, free copies can be requested by phoning **1800 675 229** or by visiting www.healthreport.com.au where people can also sign-up for email alerts of future editions.

The findings on Australian perceptions of bowel cancer are based on responses from 1,337 Australians aged 18 years and over. The research was conducted in August 2005 by independent consultants Stollznow Research.

Pfizer Australia is the nation's leading research-based health care company, investing over \$A42m in local research and development annually. It discovers, develops, manufactures and markets innovative medical treatments for both humans and animals. For more information, visit www.pfizer.com.au.

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NB: INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL SPOKESPEOPLE ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN EACH STATE/TERRITORY

**For more information please contact Hausmann Communications:
Amy McIntosh on (02) 8353 5718 or 0404 489 917
Kylie Whetton on (02) 8353 5737 or 0413 061 122**