



CONCUSSION RECOGNITION & MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

FOR PLAYERS AND PARTNERS

Concussion is a mild brain injury, caused by trauma that results in temporary dysfunction of the brain. When it occurs a player may experience symptoms and temporary loss of brain skills such as memory and thinking abilities. It is important for players and partners to be aware of possible signs of concussion which are often subtle.

If there are some symptoms or signs of concussion, ask team mates, coaches or others present whether they observed the player to be unconscious, dazed or confused at the time of the incident. If a player with concussion returns to sport whilst still symptomatic, there is increased risk of further injury. **Therefore, no player who has concussion, or suspected of having concussion, should return to their sporting activity (training or playing) until cleared by a doctor.**

Some of the possible symptoms of concussion:

- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Feeling like being in a fog
- Memory loss
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting

Some of the signs you may observe:

- Slow to get up
- Dazed or vacant look
- Clutching or holding head
- Confusion
- Balance problems
- Irritability

You might think that you are just not feeling your usual self! Think of concussion.

- If you observe any of these symptoms or signs **see a doctor as soon as possible.**
- **If you observe deterioration in these symptoms or signs go immediately to an accident and emergency department at your nearest hospital.**

Progression and Management

As a temporary brain dysfunction, concussion will resolve with time. This may vary from an hour or so to several days. Occasionally the brain will recover even more slowly.

The best treatment is rest from physical activity and work/study. The player should be seen by a doctor who will monitor the symptoms, signs and brain functioning. **The doctor must clear the player to return to sporting activity** and this will usually involve a stepped approach with gradual increase in activities over a few days

If at any stage the symptoms or signs are getting worse seek urgent medical attention.

Other important points:

- Do not drive until medically cleared
 - No alcohol
 - No prescription or non-prescription drugs without medical supervision
- Specifically
- No sleeping tablets
 - Do not use aspirin, anti-inflammatory medication or sedating pain killers

Key Messages

1. **Concussion is a temporary dysfunction of the brain following trauma**
2. **Suspect concussion if you are irritable, sick, extensively fatigued, have a headache, or just not feeling your usual self**
3. **Seek medical attention**
4. **Rest is the best treatment followed by a gradual return to physical activity and work/study**