

THE MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

- » In the best practice management of concussion in sport, the critical element remains the welfare of the player, both in the short and long term.
- » Concussion refers to a disturbance in brain function that results from trauma to the brain. The changes are temporary and the majority of players recover completely if managed correctly.
- » Complications can occur if the player is returned to play before they have recovered from their concussion. This is why any player with suspected concussion must be withdrawn from playing or training immediately. Furthermore, no player with concussion should be returned to play in the same game.
- » Management of head injury is difficult for non-medical personnel. In the early stages of injury it is often not clear whether you are dealing with a concussion or there is a more severe underlying structural head injury.
- » Therefore, ALL players with concussion or suspected of concussion need an urgent medical assessment.
- » In the days or weeks following concussion, a player should not be allowed to return to play or train until they have had a formal medical clearance.
- » The key components of management of concussion include:
 - a) **Suspecting the diagnosis in any player with symptoms such as confusion or headache after a knock to the head;**
 - b) **Referring the player for medical evaluation; and**
 - c) **Ensuring the player has received medical clearance before allowing them to return to a graded training program.**



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