



QUEENSLAND RUGBY LEAGUE

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT AND RETURN TO PLAY



FAQ'S

What are the four (4) R's when it comes to concussion?

Recognise - recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion

Remove - remove any player who displays signs or symptoms of concussion, from a game or training

Refer - refer the player to a medical professional (doctor) for assessment as soon as possible

Return - follow the steps and timeframes outlined to gradually and safely return to play

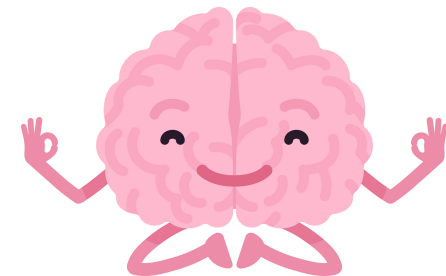
What is a concussion?

Sport-related concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct blow to the head, neck or body resulting in an impulsive force being transmitted to the brain that occurs in sports and exercise-related activities.

A player does not need to be knocked unconscious to have a suspected concussion

Signs of a Concussion

- loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- lying motionless on the ground, or slow to get up
- falling unprotected to the ground
- confused/not aware of plays or events
- dazed, blank or vacant look
- impact seizure (fits) or convulsion (stiffening or shaking of arms and/or legs)
- unsteady on feet/balance problems or falling over/in-coordination
- unusual behaviour for the player e.g. more emotional/irritable than normal
- memory impairment



Symptoms of a Concussion

- headache
- dizziness
- mental clouding, confusion, or feeling slowed down
- visual problems
- nausea or vomiting
- fatigue
- drowsiness/feeling like "in a fog"/difficulty concentrating
- pressure in head
- sensitivity to light or noise
- neck pain

What if a player has suffered a suspected concussion?

A player who has suffered a suspected concussion must be taken out of the game or training session immediately

Honesty

Players must be HONEST in reporting how they feel. Uncooperative behaviour by players should be considered a possible sign of concussion and result in their removal from play as a potential head injury.

What happens when the player is removed from the field, with a suspected concussion?

Any player who is removed from the activity with a suspected concussion must be referred to a doctor for assessment, as soon as possible (preferably the same day)

Can the player return to the field on the same day?

A player who has suffered a suspected concussion or exhibits the symptoms of concussion should not return to play in the same game (or any game until medically cleared by a doctor), even if they appear to have recovered.

Concussion is an evolving condition and symptoms, and signs can vary over minutes to hours and days

Who determines if the player has suffered a concussion?

A Sports Trainer can identify symptoms of a concussion.

A medical practitioner diagnoses the concussion. It is important to understand that brief sideline evaluation tools are designed to help in the identification of a suspected concussion. It is still imperative to arrange a more comprehensive medical assessment by an appropriately experienced medical practitioner (doctor)

How does the Sports Trainer record the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

The injury report form and Head Injury Recognition & Referral Form (HIRRF) are available online using My Sideline. All trainers are encouraged to complete the digital versions of the forms after an injury.

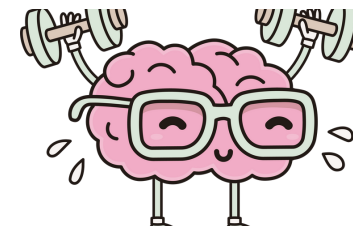
Even if the Sports Trainer completes the paper version of the forms, that information must still be completed in the online reporting forms, as soon as possible, after the game

What does the player need to take with them to the doctor?

They must present with the Head Injury Recognition & Referral Form. A summary of all signs and symptoms is emailed to the player/parent/guardian once the Sports Trainer has completed the online version of the HIRRF. The player/parent/guardian can either email this to their doctor or print and take it to the doctor, before the doctor signs the medical clearance.

Players suspected of having a concussion

Must not be allowed to drive, operate machinery, drink alcohol, take anti-inflammatory medication (including aspirin and ibuprofen), or use strong painkillers or sleeping tablets until they have been medically cleared to do so by a doctor



When can the player return?

In the period following a diagnosed concussion, a player should not be allowed to return to play or train until:

- they have served the recommended recovery period
- they have completed the Return to Play stages
- they have had a NRL Community Head Injury/Concussion Medical Clearance form completed

What if the player is cleared by the doctor, of concussion within the 48 hours?

If the doctor has assessed the Head Injury Recognition & Referral Form and signed the NRL Community Head Injury/Concussion Medical Clearance, clearing the player of concussion, the player is able to return to train/play without completing the gradual return to play stages

▪ Adult (19 years and over) – 11 days – can return to play on the 12th day, providing:

- the gradual return to play steps have been successfully completed
- the NRL Community Head Injury/Concussion Medical Clearance has been signed by a medical professional

▪ Child/Adolescent (18 years and younger) – 19 days – can return to play on the 20th day, providing:

- the gradual return to learn and return to play steps have been successfully completed
- the NRL Community Head Injury/Concussion Medical Clearance has been signed by a medical professional

Note: the day of injury is classified as day zero

When does the player begin the Return to Play (RTP) process?

The day by day Return to Play process is outlined in this [document](#)

What if the player has received multiple concussions?

There are some cases in which a player will need additional support and medical advice before returning to play

- With two (2) or more concussions within one (1) season, including pre-season games

In these instances, no further participation in Rugby League or contact sports should take place until the player is cleared by a doctor who is an expert in concussion management e.g., neurologist, neurosurgeon, or sports physician

Remember - if in doubt, sit them out!



RESOURCES

NRL - Community Head Injury
Recognition and Referral Form



NRL - Community Medical
Clearance Form



Policy & Guidelines for the
Management of Concussion

