



QUEENSLAND RUGBY LEAGUE

# CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT AND RETURN TO PLAY

Jan 2026

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# FAQ'S

## What is a concussion?

Concussion is a disturbance in brain function resulting from a trauma that is transmitted to the brain either directly or indirectly. There is no need for direct head impact for a concussion to occur. A player does not have to lose consciousness to have concussion

# IMPORTANT!

**When considering the management of concussion the welfare of the player - both short and long term must always remain paramount**

## 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

## 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). ALL players removed from a game or training session with a suspected concussion must seek medical assessment by a medical practitioner (doctor) within 72 hours (3 days) of the injury even if the signs and symptoms resolve.

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

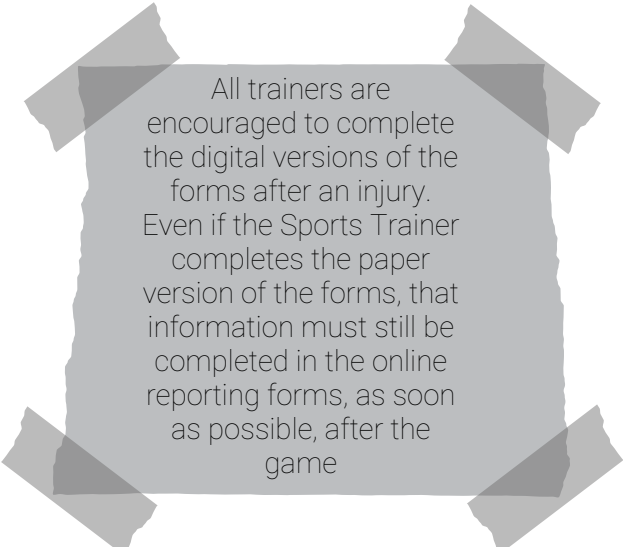
A player who has suffered a suspected concussion or exhibits the symptoms of concussion should not return to play in the same game (or any game until medically cleared by a doctor)

## Who determines if the player has suffered a concussion?

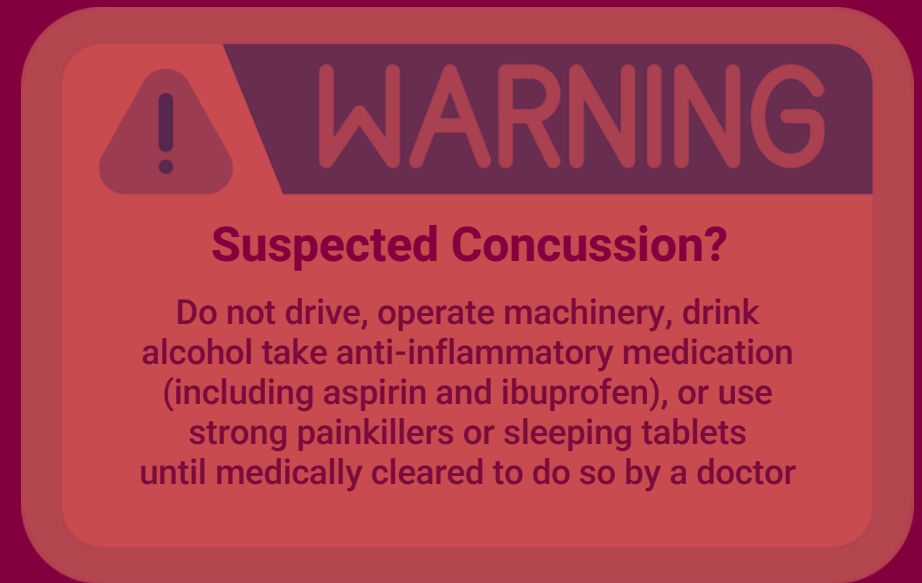
- A Sports Trainer can identify symptoms of a concussion
- A medical practitioner diagnoses the concussion

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

- Injury Report Form and
- Head Injury Recognition & Referral Form (HIRRF).
- Both forms are available online using MySideline



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 two (2) page Head Injury Recognition & Referral Form (HIRRF)
- 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 doctor signs the NRL medical clearance - no other form will be accepted.

## 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 formal medical clearance using the NRL medical clearance form signed and stamped by the medical practitioner

[Return to play day by day guidelines](#)

## What if the player is cleared by the doctor, of concussion within the 72 hours?

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

**Confirmed concussion - for what recommended period is the player unable to play?**

### **Adult - 19 years & over**

- 11 days
- can return to play on the 12th day

### **Child/Adolescent - 18 years & younger**

- 19 days
- can return to play on the 20th day



### **Providing the following:**

- The gradual return to learn and return to play steps have been successfully completed (child)
- Gradual return to play steps have been successfully completed (adult)
- The NRL Medical Clearance Form has been signed and stamped by a medical practitioner

## Can the player return to play before the relevant period has been served?

The injured player MUST be assessed by a Medical Practitioner within 72 hours (3 days) after a head injury and PRIOR to commencing a Return to Sport Strategy. If a player is not assessed within that time period, they will be required to adhere to the minimum standdown timeframe for their age.



**ONLY the NRL  
Medical  
Clearance Form  
will be accepted**

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

- 24-48 hours of complete rest (physical and mental)
- Consult a doctor before starting the RTP process
- The RTP should be supervised by the doctor
- Children/Adolescents (18 & younger) should progress slower through the RTP program (twice as long)
- Return to school/work without symptoms before starting the RTP program
- Each stage should take at least 24 hours (48 hours for child/adolescent)
  - Stage one can commence after the 48 hours of complete rest and with doctors' approval
  - Player should re-visit doctor to have the NRL Medical Clearance Form signed
- If at any stage during the RTP, the concussion symptoms return, another 48 hours of the previous stage, is required
- If symptoms persist, player must return to the doctor for consultation



**PLAYER HONESTY  
IS VITAL IN THIS PROCESS**

# RESOURCES

Community Rugby League Policy  
and Guidelines for the Management  
of Concussion



NRL - Community Head Injury  
Recognition and Referral  
Form



NRL - Community Head  
Injury/Concussion Medical  
Clearance

