

# CONCUSSION GUIDELINES

## HOW CONCUSSIONS HAPPEN

Blow to the head, face, jaw or even elsewhere on the body. May also result from whiplash effect to the head or neck. A Player can sustain a concussion **WITHOUT** losing consciousness.

## SUMMARY PRINCIPLES

- Concussion must be taken extremely seriously to safeguard the long-term welfare of players.
- Players suspected of having concussion must be removed from play and must not resume play in the match.
- Players suspected of having a concussion MUST be medically assessed.
- Players suspected of having concussion or diagnosed with concussion must go through a graduated return to play protocol (GRTP).
- Players must receive medical clearance before returning back to play.

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be **IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY**, and should not be returned to activity until they are assessed medically. Athletes with a suspected concussion should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.

\*It is recommended that, in all cases of suspected concussion, the player be referred to a medical professional for diagnosis and guidance, as well as return to play decisions, even if symptoms resolve.

## RED FLAGS

If **ANY** of the following are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from the field. If a qualified medical professional is not available, consider transporting by ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Athlete complains of neck pain
- Increasing confusion
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizure or convulsion
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Severe or increasing headache
- Unusual behavior change
- Double vision

## REMEMBER

In all cases, the basic principles of first aid are:

- Identification of Danger
- Call for Emergency Response
- Airway, breathing & circulation
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to do so especially in cases of suspected neck/spinal injury.
- Do not remove Protective head or shoulder equipment (if present) unless trained to do so

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

- There is widespread variation in the initial effects of concussion and the symptoms may arise in any combination.
- If a player shows ANY of the symptoms described below as a result of a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with a force being transmitted to the head, they have suspected concussion.
  - Loss of consciousness
  - Seizure or convulsion
  - Balance problems
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Drowsiness
  - More emotional
  - Irritability
  - Sadness
  - Fatigue or low energy
  - Nervous or anxious
  - "Don't feel right"
  - Difficulty remembering
  - Headache
  - Dizziness
  - Confusion
  - Feeling slowed down
  - "Pressure in head"
  - Blurred vision
  - Sensitivity to light
  - Amnesia
  - Feeling like "in a fog"
  - Neck Pain
  - Sensitivity to noise
  - Difficulty concentrating



For further information on concussions, visit [irbplayerwelfare.com](http://irbplayerwelfare.com)

## MEMORY FUNCTION

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion

- "At what venue are we at today?"
- "Which half is it now?"
- "Who scored last in the game?"
- "What team did you play last week/game?"
- "Did your team win the last game?"



## HYDRATION

Water has a number of roles within the body:

- The circulation of nutrients, Removal of waste products, Maintaining body temperature

The single largest contributor to fatigue during performance is dehydration. Fluid losses of up to 2% of your body weight have shown decreases in sporting performance. When you are dehydrated your temperature and heart rate increase significantly more than during normal exercise causing standards.

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## AM I HYDRATED?

Hydration is easily monitored through checking the colour and quantity of your urine. Clear or straw coloured urine reflects an adequate fluid intake, while a darker colour indicates that you need to step up your fluid consumption.

## HOW DO I REHYDRATE?

- Daily:** Drink 35-45ml/kg.
- Before Exercise:** Drink 5-7mls/kg at least 4 hours prior.
- During Exercise:** 150-250mls every 15-20min.
- After Exercise:** 1.5lts for every 1kg lost.