



Sports Medicine Australia has a policy on the management of concussion. Under this policy, any player with a suspected concussion should be immediately removed from play.

Concussion is a disturbance in brain function caused by direct or indirect force to the head. Concussion results in a variety of signs and symptoms (listed below). Most concussions **do not** involve loss of consciousness.

Immediate management:

1. Recognise that the injury may be concussion.
2. Remove the player from the game. Players should **not** be returned to play on the day of the injury.
3. Refer the player to a medical doctor for assessment.

1. Recognising the injury

Concussion should be suspected if one or more of the following is present.

Potential **signs** of concussion include:

- Loss of consciousness
- Unresponsive or slow to get up
- Clutching or holding of head
- Unsteady on feet / balance problems
- Vacant stare or glazed look
- Slurred or slowed speech
- Not following instructions
- Facial injury

Some common **symptoms** of concussion include:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea/vomiting
- Loss of memory
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Feeling "not quite right" or "like being in a fog"
- Fatigue
- Sensitivity to light or noise

2. Remove the player from the game

Players with suspected concussion **must**:

- Be closely monitored for deterioration (i.e. not be left alone)
- Not drive a motor vehicle
- Not be returned to play until assessed by a medical doctor

3. Refer the player to a medical doctor for assessment

ALL players with a suspected concussion need an immediate medical assessment (with a registered medical doctor).

If a doctor is not available at the venue, the player should be sent to a local general practice or hospital emergency department.

- a) Local General Practice / Medical Centre

- b) Local Hospital Emergency Department

- c) Ambulance services (dial 000)

Management of an unconscious player

- Use basic first aid principles when dealing with any unconscious player (i.e. Airway, Breathing, CPR...). Take care with the player's neck, which may have also been injured in the incident
- Unconscious players must only be moved (on to the stretcher) by qualified health professionals, trained in spinal immobilisation techniques. Do not move the player without a qualified health professional – wait for the ambulance

A player should be urgently transferred to hospital if they display any of the following;

- Loss of consciousness or seizures
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Deterioration after the injury (e.g. increased drowsiness, headache or repeated vomiting)
- Neck pain or spinal cord symptoms (player reports numbness, tingling or weakness in arms or legs)



For more information visit sportconcussion.com.au

Source: From *The Management of Concussion in Australian Football*, Australian Football League, March 2013. Reproduced with permission.