

CONCUSSION

We are sorry to hear you may have a suspected concussion

Under the AFL's Community Concussion policy, you are now required to follow the return to play guidelines which apply to football and netball sustained concussions. You can read more about the guidelines [here](https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2024-03/The-Management-of-Sport-Related-Concussion-in-Australian-Football-March-2024_0.pdf). https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2024-03/The-Management-of-Sport-Related-Concussion-in-Australian-Football-March-2024_0.pdf

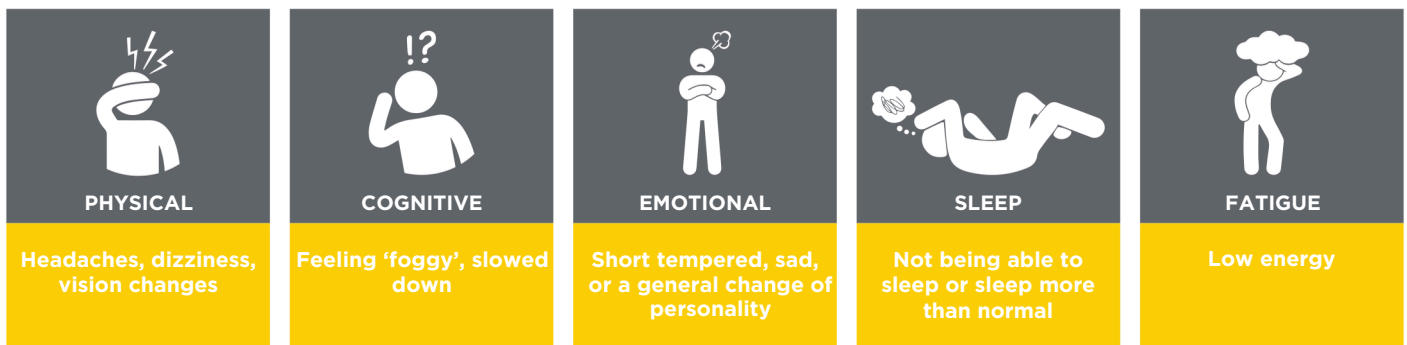
BUT FIRST WHAT IS A CONCUSSION??

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.

It can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. It is worth noting that it can also occur from minor knocks and players do not need to be knocked out to experience a concussion.

CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS?

The onset of symptoms is often evolving and changes over hours and days. It may take up to 48 hours to experience concussion symptoms. **If symptoms worsen in the first few days, you should revisit your GP or Emergency department** as soon as possible as there may be something more sinister occurring.



SIGNS OF CONCUSSION

- Confusion/disorientation, memory issues
- Dazed, vacant stare or not their normal selves.
- Behaviour changes atypical of the athlete (eg. aggression, crying, sobbing)
- Headache, neck pain, pressure, fatigue)
- Pale
- Nauseous
- Not keeping up with the play
- Running the wrong direction
- Not oriented to questions
- Answering questions incorrectly
- Headache
- Bleeding from the head / mouth / ears
- Sensitive to light /noise
- loss of consciousness (happens only in 10% of concussions)
- Lying motionless
- Motor incoordination
- Balance problems /stumbles/ staggering
- No protective action—floppy/tonic
- Impact seizure/convulsion
- Tonic posturing
- Slow to get up
- Clutching head
- Balance - Falling to the ground

AFTER A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION YOU SHOULD

- Do not be left alone initially (at least for 3hrs). Worsening symptoms should lead to immediate medical attention ED/GP (especially vomiting, increasing drowsiness or severe worsening headache)
- Do not Drink alcohol, use recreational drugs or drugs not prescribed by a healthcare practitioner.
- Do not Drive a motor vehicle until cleared.
- Rest – don't go exercising or go out.
- Aim to stay awake 1st 4-6 hrs post-injury (this is usually when serious brain bleeds would occur)
Then allow sleep if it would usually be time for bed.
- Can check overnight for vomiting – don't need to wake them if they look ok
- No dark room.
- No screen time.
- Anti-inflammatory diet

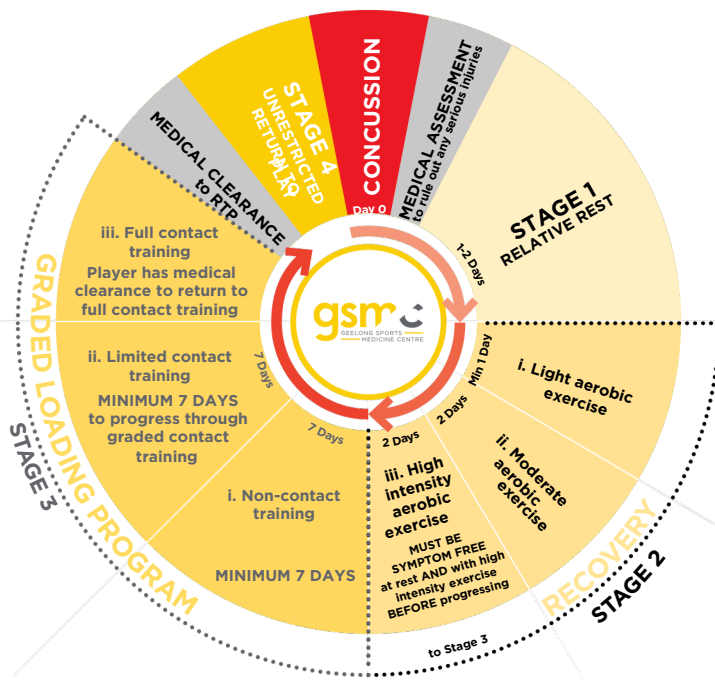
BUT I FEEL FINE WHY CAN'T I PLAY?

Returning too soon increases the risk of more severe injury as the brain needs time to heal. There is a greater chance of another concussion occurring due to the energy deficit and cognitive symptoms. Multiple Concussions in a short period of time can result in worsening conditions, long term brain health issues or even Second Impact Syndrome.

AFL COMMUNITY CONCUSSION GUIDELINES

STEP 1 - Visit your doctor or Emergency department to rule out any serious injuries, including bleeding or underlying structural head or neck injury. And to officially diagnose a concussion.

STEP 2 - FOLLOW THE AFL RETURN TO PLAY PROGRAM - EXAMPLE BELOW FOR A MILD CONCUSSION - ASSYMPTOMATIC AFTER 7 DAYS



STEP 3 - Before returning to play you will need to have a GP or Concussion Trained doctor complete the Return-to-play clearance form and return it to club concussion officer or your coach. https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2024-03/Medical-Clearance-Form_0.pdf

FINAL NOTE...DO THE RIGHT THING

Players, coaches & families all have a shared responsibility to do the right thing when it comes to managing concussion – from recognising symptoms and speaking up, to following the AFL's protocols and supporting recovery even when it's frustrating. As a club, we have a clear directive to follow these protocols and foster a culture that provides a duty of care, upholds the integrity of the game and puts the safety of our community first.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE

- Recovery times are individual and vary according to sex, age, and presence of previous injuries.
- It is a 'silent' injury - Concussion symptoms aren't always obvious, and players may not immediately recognise them.
- In most cases symptoms should disappear after 7 days but it can take on average 21 days to fully recover from a concussion.
- 21 days is the minimum time the AFL require you to sit out. The return to play must be individual.
- You should be symptom free before return to sport. And prioritise returning to school before sport. It is reasonable to miss a day or two of school/work after concussion, but extended absence is uncommon. In some instances, a graduated return to school/work program will need to be developed.
- Day Zero is the day the concussion occurred. It can be normal for children and adolescents to take longer to recover than adults.
- It is your responsibility to inform the school, coaches etc that you have a concussion and are required to follow the protocol.
- You should refrain from participating in other sports or training until you have cleared each stage of the AFL Return to play program symptom free. This includes school sports.

KEY CONTACTS

Only a doctor can diagnose a concussion and clear a player to play under the AFL guidelines.

If symptoms are persisting or you need help with the graded return to play, book an appointment with a Neuro Physio. GSMC our club partner have two - Megan Hamilton or Drew McInnes at GSMC 52222047.

Check with your club to see whether treatment is insured under the AFL Barwon insurance policy.

You can find out more about concussion at the Play AFL Website, Concussion - Play AFL

YOUR CLUB CONCUSSION OFFICER IS:

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WE HOPE YOU MAKE A SPEEDY RECOVERY