

Head Injury Fact Sheet

The signs and symptoms of concussion may occur immediately or may develop over minutes, hours, or days. It is possible that people feel better soon after a head injury, but that does not mean they have not suffered a concussion. The changes in your brain may develop over some time and may persist for days and weeks, even after a relatively minor hit.

Some of the signs of concussion include (but are not limited to);

- Suspected or definite loss of consciousness
- Dizziness
- Disorientation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Incoherent speech
- Sensitivity to light
- Confusion
- Ringing in the ears
- Memory loss
- Fatigue
- Dazed or vacant stare
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Loss of balance



What to do

As a member who has been recognised as having a potential concussion, you should make an appointment to see a medical doctor in the next 24-48 hours where possible or as soon as practical afterwards. This may be a HP or a specialist Sports and Exercise Physician. It may not be a physiotherapist, chiropractor, osteopath, trainer, or masseur. The medical doctor will assess and guide your progress over the next steps in the process.

Whilst waiting to see a medical doctor, you should avoid any physical activity, and be in the care of a responsible adult at all times.

Important:

The player must completely rest (reduce mental and physical activity) for a minimum of 24-hours after suspected injury. The required time of rest will vary between players; therefore, a medical doctor will specify the minimum rest time for each player.

It is advisable when making an appointment with a medical doctor to note:

- Assessment can take 30 minutes, so a long appointment should be requested when booking.
- Take a copy of the Referral and Return form with you (section 1 completed)
- Take a copy of the Graded Return to Sport Framework



What not to do

- Be left alone
- Watch TV or play computer games
- Drink alcohol
- Swim alone
- Drive a car
- Handle heavy machinery
- Take anti-inflammatory or pain killer medication stronger than paracetamol unless instructed by your doctor



Red Flags

The signs and symptoms of concussion can sometimes be the same as more severe head injuries. If the following signs and symptoms occur, they could be a sign that there is something more serious happening. These are called 'Red Flags' and if they occur, you should immediately attend the nearest Emergency Hospital, or ring 000 for an Ambulance.

- Deterioration of conscious state
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Changes in normal behaviour
- Fit seizure or convulsions
- Double vision
- Blurred vision
- Slurred speech
- Continuing unsteadiness
- Weakness or tingling / burning in arms or legs
- Repeated vomiting – more than once
- Severe or unusual neck pain

IHNSW Concussion management procedure provides information and process and the obligations on all participants, it is important that you read this document and understand your obligations.

For further information please refer to www.ihns.com.au/concussion

NOTE: A player must provide a completed Referral and Return form to their team manager for presentation to the concussion coordinator and submitted to the IHNSW executive officer prior to returning to full contact training and or match play.