

AFL CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES 2026

Any player with concussion or suspected concussion must

1. Be removed from play/training and can **not** return-to-play that day
2. Have a prompt assessment by a **Doctor** (within 1-3 days)
3. Submit information as directed by an email from **PlayHQ**

Concussion or Suspected Concussion	=	Forceful Collision or Knock to Head or Body	+	Any Signs or Symptoms of Concussion
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Visual Signs (one or more)

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on ground or slow to get up
- Vomiting
- Tonic posturing or impact seizure
- Unsteady on feet / balance problems or falling over / incoordination
- Grabbing or clutching head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confused / not aware of play or events
- Impaired memory
- Facial injury
- Player does not seem like their normal self

Symptoms (can develop over time)

- Headache
- Nausea or feeling like vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feeling “dinged” or “dazed”
- “Don’t feel right”
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- More emotional or irritable than usual
- Sadness
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Neck pain
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling like in a fog
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering

If you suffer a concussion or suspected concussion you will need to see a **Doctor** in the days immediately afterwards. You will be given 2 forms to be taken to the Doctor – Match Day Referral and Medical Clearance forms.

If you suffer a concussion or suspected concussion you should not:

- Be left alone for at least 3 hrs
- Drink alcohol or use recreational drugs
- Drive until seen by a Doctor

Following concussion, you will need to follow a protocol of **Return to Play** which takes a minimum of 21 days

Return To Play

Progression through protocol to be managed by Club Physios/Trainers

- Stage 1. Relative Rest (24-48hrs)
 Normal daily activities
 Reduce screen time
 Can take panadol
- Stage 2. Recovery
 Can start exercising but NO team training drills
 OK to continue to have symptoms
 Light exercise progresses to high intensity – supervised by physio
 Progress slowly back to school/uni/work
 Min 6 days – but can be variable
- Stage 3. Graded Loading
 Can only start when NO symptoms at rest or during exercise
 Able to return to team training sessions
 Progress from non-contact to limited contact to full contact
 If symptoms return, must see Doctor and return to Stage 2
 Need Medical Clearance to return to Full Contact Training
 Min 14 days

Any concussed player must NOT return to competitive contact sport including full contact team training before having a Doctor's clearance, and this has been sighted by Club Physio / Team Manager / Concussion Officer

Players will be required to submit Doctor's name and contact details, and proposed return-to-play date in PlayHQ

Overall time taken to return to play = 1-2 days + 6 days + 14 days = minimum 21 days

A player aged 18 or under must be managed more conservatively and will be expected to take longer than 3 weeks to return to play. Individual cases will have variable recovery times and may result in variable length of time to return to play. Persistent symptoms will require ongoing medical care and management

Further Info

manlywolves.com/resources

play.afl/concussion

Concussion Officer – Matt Cameron – 0411 331 449 – mattcameron2108@gmail.com