



**FOOTBALL
AUSTRALIA**

COMMUNITY SPORTS RELATED CONCUSSION GUIDELINES

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT."

What is Sports Related Concussion (SRC)

Sports Related Concussion (SRC) is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct blow to the head, neck or body resulting in an impulsive force being transmitted to the brain that occurs in sports and exercise-related activities.

How is SRC diagnosed?

SRC can only be diagnosed by a qualified medical practitioner (e.g., Sport & Exercise Physician, Neurologist, Sports Doctor) based on the event, signs and symptoms, physical examination, and with specific concussion assessment tools.

Does SRC always involve losing consciousness?

No. SRC's may or may not involve loss of consciousness.

Do the signs and symptoms of SRC present themselves immediately?

No. Signs and symptoms may present immediately or develop over minutes or hours.

What are the signs (what you see) that a player may have suffered a SRC?

- Can't recall events *prior to* or *after* a hit or fall.
- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about a task, role or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (*even briefly*).
- Shows mood, behaviour, or personality changes.

What are the symptoms (what the player reports) of SRC?

- Headache or "pressure" in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems.
- Dizziness.
- Double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down".

Do the signs and symptoms of SRC settle quickly?

The duration of symptoms and signs are variable and can commonly resolve within days, although may be prolonged and take months to resolve in some individuals.

How can a non-medically qualified medical practitioner recognise signs and symptoms of SRC?

The Concussion Recognition Tool (CRT6) has been developed as a recommended pitch-side tool to **assist any person**, including a non-medically trained individual to recognise symptoms and signs of a suspected SRC. The CRT6 can be found at this link: [Assessment of concussion | Concussion in Australian Sport](#)

Should players with a suspected SRC stay on the pitch?

No. Any player with a suspected SRC must be immediately removed from the match or training session. If in doubt, sit them out.

What do I do if the injured player has a suspected neck injury?

If a suspected neck injury has occurred, the player **should not** be moved, and their neck stabilised until assessed by qualified medical personnel for potential spinal injury.

Can the player resume playing or training if they indicate they're feeling better?

The player must not take further part in any activity, including training or matches or other sports on the day of injury, even if the player reports feeling recovered.

What should a player with a suspected SRC do?

All players with a suspected SRC should be assessed by a medical practitioner with appropriate training in SRC management (e.g., a Sport & Exercise Physician, Neurologist, Sports Doctor) within 3-4 days of the SRC event.

What signs or symptoms would indicate that emergency medical assessment is required by a player with a suspected SRC?

- Worsening headache.
- Repeated vomiting.
- Excessive drowsiness or inability to be awakened.
- Seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably).
- Inability to recognize people or places.
- Any behavioural change, increasing confusion, irritability.
- Slurred speech, double vision.
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs.
- Unsteadiness on feet.
- Loss of consciousness at the time of injury.

When is it ok for a player with a diagnosed SRC to return to full contact training and playing?

For a community footballer, there must be a minimum 14-day symptom-free at rest before a return to full contact training and a minimum 21 days from the SRC event in addition to a minimum 14-day symptom-free at rest before a return to competitive match play.

Are the guidelines different for players that suffer multiple SRCs?

Players suffering multiple SRC in a season or across seasons (>2 in 12 months) need to be assessed by a specialist medical practitioner (i.e., Sport & Exercise Physician or Neurologist) experienced in SRC management. Players suffering multiple SRCs should not return to partial or full play (match or training) until extensive clinical assessment has been conducted. Only after extensive specialist medical practitioner consultation and clearance should players participate in training or matches.

This Quick Reference Guide should be considered in conjunction with Football Australia's Community Sports Related Concussion Guidelines. These guidelines are intended to assist in the management of sports related concussion and do not replace the need to seek medical assessment. This information should not be interpreted as a guideline for clinical practice or legal standard of care.



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