



# CONCUSSION IN SPORT

## Key points for medical practitioners

- > Concussion can be difficult to detect. The symptoms and signs can be varied, non-specific and subtle.
- > Athletes with suspected concussion should be removed from sport and assessed by a medical doctor.
- > When assessing acute concussions, a standard primary survey and cervical spine precautions should be used.
- > Concussion diagnosis should be based on a clinical history and examination that includes a range of domains such as mechanism of injury, symptoms and signs, cognitive functioning and neurology including balance assessment.
- > Sport Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT 5) is the internationally recommended concussion assessment tool and covers the abovementioned domains. It is available at [bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/early/2017/04/26/bjsports-2017-097506SCAT5.full.pdf](https://bjsm.bmj.com/content/bjsports/early/2017/04/26/bjsports-2017-097506SCAT5.full.pdf). This should be used as part of the overall clinical assessment.
- > Computerised neurocognitive testing can be undertaken as part of the assessment but should not be used in isolation.
- > Children and adolescents may be more susceptible to concussion and take longer to recover. A more conservative approach should be taken with those aged 18 years or younger and the symptom-free rest period should be extended from 24 to 48 hours. The graduated return to sport protocol for a child should take at least 14 days.
- > Blood tests are not indicated for uncomplicated concussion. Medical imaging is not indicated unless there is suspicion of more serious head or brain injury.
- > Standard head-injury advice should be given to all athletes suffering concussion and to their carer.
- > Once the diagnosis of concussion has been made, immediate management is physical and cognitive rest. This includes time off school or work and rest from all cognitive activity. The majority of concussive symptoms should resolve in 7–10 days. After a minimum of 24 hours without any symptoms the patient can commence a staged return to cognitive and physical activity.
- > Some sports have their own guidelines or recommendations around the management of concussion in sport which should also be considered.

For more information visit [concussioninsport.gov.au](https://concussioninsport.gov.au)

*"if in doubt, sit them out"*