

## NEW ZEALAND RUGBY PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS KEY INFORMATION

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# 10. CONCUSSION

- Concussion is a brain injury caused by the impact of force (a blow) to a part of the body, not necessarily the head directly.
- If you or a teammate suffer an injury that impacts on your head and experience any of the following during a match or at training you should immediately seek medical assistance:
  - Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
  - Lying motionless on ground/ Slow to get up
  - Unsteady on feet / Balance problems or falling over/Incoordination
  - Grabbing/Clutching of head
  - Dazed, blank or vacant look
  - Confused/Not aware of plays or events

- How do you know whether you have been concussed during a match or at training? It is difficult to positively identify concussion during a match or at training but you will generally have one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

Loss of consciousness - Headache - Seizure or convulsion - Dizziness - Balance problems - Confusion - Nausea or vomiting - Feeling slowed down - Drowsiness - “Pressure in head” - More emotional - Blurred vision - Irritability - Sensitivity to light - Sadness - Amnesia - Fatigue or low energy - Feeling like “in a fog” - Nervous or anxious - Neck Pain - “Don’t feel right” - Sensitivity to noise - Difficulty remembering - Difficulty concentrating

The key is to seek medical assistance - don’t try and self-diagnose or hide any symptoms or concerns, you must speak up if you are concerned about yourself or a fellow player.

- It is important to note that these signs and symptoms might not be present straight away. They may be delayed by several hours. In either event they should be reported to the Team Doctor as soon as possible.
- On many occasions, the symptoms of concussion will disappear quickly but on occasion they will be prolonged. Any prolonged symptoms must be reported to the Team Doctor as soon as possible.
- The best thing you can do if you have any of these symptoms is to rest the body and rest the brain. You should rest until the symptoms have gone away and not return to playing or training until you have been medically cleared, and feel within yourself that you are ready.

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- Protective equipment such as headgear and mouth guards won't necessarily prevent concussion occurring but mouth guards must be worn to prevent other injuries to the face and jaw.
- You should educate yourself about concussion by logging onto the World Rugby website at <http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com/> and complete the concussion educational module for the General Public.
- At the professional level of the game if you suffer a bang or a blow then you may be removed from the field of play to undertake a Head Injury Assessment (HIA). If at any stage **concussion is suspected** by the attending medical professional you must be removed from the field of play permanently.
- To understand more about the process involving the removal of a player from the field for play for a HIA please ask your Team Doctor to take you through it.
- If at any stage you become concerned about concussion in respect of yourself or a teammate contact your Team Doctor, a member of Team Management or the NZRPA on 0800 PLAYER