

## HOW TO REFERENCE THE CONCUSSION GUIDELINES:

The AFL-approved guidelines for the management of sport-related concussion in Australian Football provide guidance on the best way to assess and manage concussion amongst players at all levels below the AFL / AFLW competitions. When sharing the guidelines across your social media network – or any other marketing channel – it is important that the guidelines are referenced correctly.

Below is a list of key messages, suggested social posts as well as notes on 'incorrect' ways to reference the guidelines.

## Key messages:

- > The guidelines have been developed to assist community football leagues, clubs, players, parents, coaches, trainers & other stakeholders on how to assess and manage any player who has suffered concussion or is suspected of having a concussion.
- > The most important steps in initial management include:
  - Recognising a suspected concussion.
  - Removing the player from the match or training.
  - Referring the player to a medical doctor for assessment.
  - Where there is no medical doctor present to assess the player, or the diagnosis of concussion cannot be ruled out at the time of injury, the player must not be allowed to return to play in the same match / training session.
- > Important steps for return to play following concussion include:
  - A brief period of complete physical and cognitive rest (24-48 hours).
  - A period of symptom-limited activity (e.g., reading, walking) to allow full recovery.
  - A graded loading program (with monitoring).
  - Clearance by a medical doctor (prior to returning to competitive contact sport / full contact training sessions).
- > Players should not enter the graded loading program until they have recovered from their concussion. Recovery means that all concussion-related symptoms and signs have fully resolved (for at least 24 hours) at rest and with activities of daily living, and they have successfully returned to work or school, without restrictions.
- > The earliest that a player may return to play (once they have successfully completed a graded loading program and they have obtained medical clearance) is on the 12th day following the concussion.
- > The AFL-approved concussion management app HeadCheck ([www.headcheck.com.au](http://www.headcheck.com.au)) should be utilised to recognise and assist in the management of any suspected concussion for both adults and children.

## Suggested social media copy for Facebook & Instagram:

- > The AFL have advised how to manage concussion in community football. Read now:  
<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>
  
- > We're using the AFL's latest guide on how to recognise and manage concussion in community football. Read the guidelines here:  
<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>
  
- > It is important we understand the process to return to play following a concussion. Read the AFL's new guidelines:  
<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>
  
- > Do you know how to recognise the signs or symptoms of a possible concussion? Learn how to do that now:  
<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>
  
- > Do you know what to do if you suspect a possible concussion? Learn the steps for initial management of concussion here:  
<https://www.afl.com.au/clubhelp/policies/health-and-safety/concussion-management>
  
- > There's now an easy way to help manage concussion across community football. Developed in partnership with @MurdochChildrensResearchInstitute, the @AFL approved Headcheck app will help manage concussion on the ground. Download here:  
[www.headcheck.com.au](http://www.headcheck.com.au)
  
- > Have you downloaded the @AFL approved Headcheck app to help you manage concussion across community football? Download here: [www.headcheck.com.au](http://www.headcheck.com.au)

## Incorrect reference to the guidelines:

It is important that players follow the process outlined in the AFL-approved guidelines to return to play rather than just waiting for 12 days to pass and then returning to play. This is particularly important because a more conservative approach is:

- > Required where there is a lack of baseline testing and the where absence of regular contact between players and a medical doctor limits the ability to assess recovery following concussion.
- > Important for children and adolescents, players with a history of concussion and where there is a recurrence of symptoms at any stage during the return to play program.

Therefore, when referencing the guidelines, the focus should be on the process to follow to return to play rather than on the 12 days.