

FACT SHEET

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

Concussion in sport - Riders

The *Concussion in Sport Australia* position statement recommends any athlete with suspected concussion is not allowed to return to the field of play on the same day of injury and should be assessed by a medical practitioner before returning to sport. It is important that coaches and parents understand the signs and symptoms of concussion and the long term impacts on health, wellbeing and learning.

WHAT IS CONCUSSION?

Concussion is an injury where the brain moves rapidly back and forth, can twist or hit the skull. This can be caused by a blow or jolt to the head (e.g. being hit in the head by a horse's head), or by a sudden stop (as in a fall). It should be noted that concussion can occur in a fall from a horse where the rider lands on their feet or bottom but does not necessarily hit their head.

Concussion involves temporary neurological impairment. The symptoms may evolve over the hours or days following the injury. It's important to understand that:

- **All concussion is serious!**
- **Helmets will not stop concussion from occurring (*they are still important for prevention of traumatic head injuries such as lacerations or skull fractures*)**

MANAGING CONCUSSION

Following a fall or injury to the head, the RDA Coach will sit the participant out of activities under the supervision of a responsible adult and monitor for signs and symptoms of concussion for at least 15-20 minutes. They will monitor for evidence that the participant is:

- behaving unusually, or out of character,
- exhibits signs of disorientation,
- showing signs of clumsiness or loss of balance.

And they will seek immediate medical attention if symptoms of a concussion are present. The participant may not be recommended to return to activities that day but activities may be modified such as patting, grooming or leading their horse (if suitable). They may arrange for adult participants to get a ride home rather than driving themselves. They will provide the participant/teacher/parent/carer with an Incident & Accident Report, information about concussion and instructions to seek immediate medical attention if symptoms of concussion or other injury present. You may be requested to provide a medical clearance that it is suitable to return to RDA activities following a suspected concussion. Your doctor may recommend a break from sporting activities for 14 days.

WHAT TO DO AT HOME

Continue to monitor for signs and symptoms of concussion and any other injury over the next 24 hours and seek immediate medical attention if symptoms are present. Research now shows that it is common for concussed children or adolescents to have difficulty concentrating or paying attention in class. The "load" on the brain can bring on or worsen symptoms of concussion. A gradual return to learning is recommended. During recovery from concussion, it is recommended that students avoid physical activities, including sport and playground activities; extensive screen time, including television, texting, video games and computer use; loud music or music through headphones. Check with your doctor before taking medications, especially aspirin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, sleeping tablets and sedating pain medication. Adults should also avoid alcohol and should avoid driving.

RDA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This Fact Sheet is supported by RDA policies and procedures for Incident and Accident Reporting and Emergency procedures. RDA qualified coaches have current first aid training including recognising the signs and symptoms of concussion.

FACT SHEET

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

Critical symptoms/ signs	Obvious Symptoms/ Sign	Subtle Symptoms/ signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neck pain • Increasing confusion, agitation or irritability • Repeated vomiting • Seizure or convulsion • Weakness or tingling/ burning in the arms or legs • Deteriorating conscious state • Severe or increasing headache • Unusual behavioural change • Double vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of consciousness • No protective action in fall to ground observed or on video • Seizure or jerky movements after a knock • Confusion, disorientation • Memory impairment • Unsteady on feet or balance problems • Athlete reports significant, new or progressive concussion symptoms • Dazed or looking blank/ vacant • Changed behaviour – may be more irritable, agitated, anxious or emotional than normal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • ‘Pressure in the head’ • Neck pain • Nausea or vomiting • Dizziness • Blurred vision • Balance problems • Sensitivity to light • Sensitivity to noise • Feeling slowed down • Feeling like ‘in a fog’ • ‘Don’t feel right’ • Difficulty concentrating • Difficulty remembering • Fatigue or low energy • Confusion • Drowsiness • More emotional • Irritability sadness nervous or anxious • Trouble falling asleep (if applicable)
<p>If a participant displays these symptoms/ signs they may have a more serious injury. They should be immediately taken to the nearest emergency department.</p>		