



Warning: Mia Davies, Perth Glory's Aryn Williams, West Coast Fever's Ash Brazill, Shark Liam Anthony and Sandra Mejak. Picture: Steve Ferrier

Danger ahead from sport concussion

■ **Clarissa Phillips**

WA's leading sports physician is warning about the dangers of undiagnosed concussions, especially among children in grassroots sports.

Sports Medicine Australia WA director Sandra Mejak said less than 20 per cent of concussed children were diagnosed and even fewer sought medical attention.

"Concussion is really important to recognise," Dr Mejak said. "Particularly at the community level, there's quite a lot of concussion that doesn't get picked up and people just go on and play when they really should be removed from the field and referred to a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

"It's harder to assess children. The same test does not always apply to children as to adults."

Dr Mejak said children were also at more risk of concussion and could have symptoms for longer.

"There's research coming out that suggests possibly there are longer term cognitive and mental effects that can occur in kids," she said. "It affects their ability to

think, attend school, even reading is harder when you have a concussion." Dr Mejak's warning comes during Brain Awareness Week, which aims to educate adults and children about concussion.

One in seven adults will be concussed playing sport. West Coast Fever's Ash Brazill was sidelined twice with concussion last year.

"Everyone says netball is a non-contact sport but the way the game's going, it's semi-contact," she said.

"Getting two concussions in a year is definitely showing you where the game's headed. I felt fine both times and the first one I played the rest of the game.

"It wasn't until after the game that I was throwing up."

Sport and Recreation Minister Mia Davies launched a video campaign yesterday aimed at educating people about the dangers of concussion in sport.

"The aim of this campaign is to remind people of three important steps of game-day management: recognise the injury, remove the player from the game and refer the player to a doctor," she said.