Managing the Risk of Nutritional Supplements

The facts - what you need to know about supplements

- **No supplement is 100% risk free.**
- **Supplements may contain substances from WADA's Prohibited list**

- Principle of strict liability:
  - Athletes are solely accountable for prohibited substances in their system.
  - Responsibility remains regardless of how the substance entered their system or intent to cheat.

Risk of Supplements

Extreme caution is recommended regarding supplement use. A number of positive tests have been attributed to the misuse of supplements, poor labelling and supplement contamination. There is no 100% guarantee that a supplement is free from prohibited substance but there are ways to significantly minimise the risk.

Risks of supplements include:

- Manufacturing standards, which are often less strict when compared with medicines. These lower standards often lead to supplement contamination at production facilities;
- Fake or low-quality products which may contain prohibited substances and other substances that are harmful to health;
- Mislabeling of supplements – ingredients listed in the wrong dosage, or not at all identified on the product label;
- False claims that a particular supplement is endorsed by Anti-Doping Organizations or that it is “safe for athletes”. Remember, Anti-Doping Organizations do not certify supplements – this is done by third party testing agencies.

What You Should Do ?

- All athletes should do a risk-benefit assessment if they are considering the use of supplements.
- The first step of such an assessment is to consider whether a “food-first” approach meets the athlete’s needs.
- Whenever possible, such an assessment should be done with the support of a certified nutritionist who is familiar with the anti-doping system.

How do Athletes Reduce the Risk of Taking Supplements?

If, after careful consideration, an athlete chooses to use supplements, they must take the necessary steps to minimize the risks. This includes:

- Select supplements only when a benefit is likely – this should be done with the assistance of a certified nutritionist/dietitian who can properly assess the athlete's needs
- Select supplements that have been batch-tested by a reliable third-party testing agencies like NIPER Hyderabad and CoE-NSTS .
- Remember, no supplement is 100% risk-free but athletes and Athlete Support Personnel can take certain steps to minimize these risks.