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# 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.

▶ Before the supplement intake, Athletes must evaluate:

- Need for supplements
- Risks associated
- Career consequences



# Nutritional Supplements & their associated Risks

## Risks of supplements include:

- 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 independent companies.



# 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.



# Reduce Your Risk

- ▶ **No supplement is 100% risk-free but athletes and Athlete Support Personnel can take certain steps to minimize these risks.**
- ▶ 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 who can properly assess the athlete's needs
- Use supplements and doses that are safe
- Select supplements that have been batch-tested by an independent company
- Learn to recognize prohibited substances on labels or in advertising
- Look for tamper-proof/tamper-evident packaging
- Look for the authentication system provided by the manufacturers
- Beware of unsubstantiated health claims



# Checking your Supplements

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- ▶ 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 who can properly assess the athlete's needs
  - Use supplements and doses that are safe.
  - Select supplements that have been batch-tested by an independent company. Companies that batch-test supplements include **Informed Sport**, **Certified for Sport** or **Kölner Liste**.
- ▶ Remember, no supplement is 100% risk-free but athletes and Athlete Support Personnel can take certain steps to minimize these risks.
- ▶ Useful links:
  - [Australian Institute of Sport](#)
  - <https://www.usada.org/athletes/substances/supplement-connect/>



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# Supplement Use : decision tree

