



Risks of Supplement Use



Nutritional supplements present a doping risk as they may be contaminated with prohibited substances.

What is a supplement?

In general, supplements are manufactured products like pills, capsules, powders, gels, drinks and bars that contain nutrients, herbs, amino acids or other substances that can affect the body. These are typically available over-the-counter and meant to “supplement” the diet. These include:

- vitamins and minerals
- amino acids
- botanicals
- herbs or herbal remedies
- enzymes
- organ tissues
- glandular
- metabolites
- other dietary supplements.

Some common dietary supplements are:

- Protein powders
- Creatine
- Fat burners and weight loss products
- Muscle gainers
- Vitamins or multivitamins
- Arnica

But be aware, there are legally available products on the market that may be harmful to your health, may have negative effects on your performance, and may cause you to test positive.

The regulations for how supplements are manufactured can be less strict than those for medications; and, the manufacturing and sale of supplements can be tightly regulated in some countries but often these regulations are not enforced.

This means that the ingredients a supplement contains, their quality (how pure they are), how they are listed on the label, and where the supplement is purchased can create risks.



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Why using a supplement can put you at risk?

They can contain banned substances that are included on the List and can cause an athlete to test positive. In fact, some supplements might claim that they have been endorsed or certified by WADA or another Anti-Doping Organisation (ADO). **This is not true.** WADA and other ADOs do not approve, certify or endorse supplement products.

Taking a food-first approach

A common misconception about supplements is that they are a replacement for food or even superior to food. This is not true. They are not a shortcut to good nutrition. And, if you're eating well and getting the balance of nutrients and energy you need, it's likely that using supplements is unnecessary.

Talking to a medical professional

After analysing your diet and making any necessary changes, and before making a decision about using a supplement, talk to a medical professional or qualified sports nutrition professional. But, before advising you, they need to know that you are an athlete and that you must abide by the anti-doping rules.

If absolutely necessary, choose batch-tested

If a supplement is deemed essential and all the other questions have been asked, then it is recommended that a batch-tested supplement is used. [NSF International Certified for Sport®](#) program, which helps minimize the risk of unintentional doping. NSF International's Certified for Sport® laboratory testing services help clients establish product stewardship by confirming content and purity, compliance, and assessing public safety and environmental concerns on products used by athletes

A batch-tested supplement cannot remove all risks associated with supplements. However, it can significantly reduce them.

Remember

The principle of **strict liability** always applies: you are responsible for any prohibited substance found in your system and an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) can occur whether or not you intended to take a banned substance.

Source [Anti-Doping Education and Learning \(wada-ama.org\)](https://wada-ama.org)