



## **ADVISORY NOTE:**

# **USE OF SUPPLEMENTS**

***WARNING: THE USE OF SUPPLEMENTS CAN PRESENT A RISK TO ATHLETES AND MAY RESULT IN A POSITIVE DRUGS TEST***

### **WHAT ARE SUPPLEMENTS?**

Dietary or nutritional supplements are products which are used, commonly alongside a normal diet, to improve general health, increase the nutritional intake in a diet, assist with weight gain or loss and/or to enhance sport performance or recovery.

Supplements can take a variety of forms, including mineral, vitamin or herbal tablets, sports drinks, herbal drinks, energy bars, protein powders, meal replacements, natural food supplements or other related products including antioxidants, herbs, homeopathic remedies or traditional medicines. They can be found, amongst others, in a pill, tablet, capsule, powder or liquid form.

Supplements often claim to help with building muscle, increasing endurance, weight gain or loss, aiding recovery or overcoming a mineral deficiency and thus can appeal to sportsmen and women. .

### **WHY DO ATHLETES USE SUPPLEMENTS?**

Many athletes believe that it is important to take supplements to improve their sport performance or because their competitors or team mates use them. Some athletes believe that they will be at a disadvantage if they do not take supplements.

When considering the use of supplements, however, an athlete must assess the need for the use of a supplement and the risks related to taking the supplement.

Any athlete who takes supplements does so **at their own risk**. Where possible, the use of supplements should be restricted to only where absolutely necessary.

### **HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED TO TAKE VITAMIN OR MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS FOR MY HEALTH?**

An athlete is advised to consult with a competent sport science professional such as a sports nutritionist or a sports dietician to determine if he/she has a need and if that need can first be met by making changes to his/her diet or nutrition program.

Extreme caution is advised when deciding to use supplements.

### **DO SUPPLEMENTS CONTAIN PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES?**

They can and often do, even when these are not listed on the ingredients list or label.

The regulation of the manufacture and labeling of supplements is very varied from country to country. There are therefore no common rules on the manufacturing and labeling of supplements and in many cases there is insufficient, or no, government regulation of this area. This can, and indeed, has led to supplements being found to contain Prohibited Substances that (i) are not declared on the label; (ii) are listed in the ingredients under a different name to that contained on the Prohibited List; and/or (iii) have come from contamination during the manufacturing process.

There is no guarantee that just because a Prohibited Substance is not listed in the ingredients list or on the packet it will not be present in the supplement. Extreme caution is therefore advised before taking any supplement.

### **ARE NATURAL/HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS SAFE FOR ATHLETES TO USE?**

NO. Remember to exercise caution even if a supplement claims to be 'all natural or herbal'. Beware that some Prohibited Substances can also be derived from plants. In addition, and as stated above, there is no guarantee that the label or its accompanying information lists all the ingredients.

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH USING SUPPLEMENTS?**

The ICC encourages athletes to assess the risks associated with the use of Supplements when deciding to use these substances and would strongly recommend erring on the side of caution in not taking supplements if at all possible.

Many of the risks have already been identified above. In summary, however, these risks can include:

- Contamination during the manufacturing process, meaning that the contaminant will not be listed on the product label.
- Inaccurate labelling - some supplement products may contain ingredients not listed on the label. In addition, ingredients listed on the product label may include Prohibited Substances that are sometimes listed under different names when compared to the WADA Prohibited List or listed in different quantities than stated on the label.
- False advertising claims - advertising standards differ in various parts of the world therefore some advertising claims for supplement products may be untrue and/or exaggerated. Many supplement companies are not required to provide evidence of their performance enhancing claims in order for the product to go on shelves.
- Negative health effects - Supplements may contain active ingredients that have strong biological effects on an athlete's body making them unsafe and harmful to health in some situations. For example, taking too much of some supplements such as iron or vitamin A or D, or using supplements with a medication (whether prescription or over the counter) can be harmful to your health.
- False safety assurances:
  - many supplement products will claim to contain no Prohibited Substances or claim to be WADA compliant on the label. Please do not take such claims seriously. It is not possible to guarantee

- that a product does not contain a Prohibited Substance. Further, Anti-Doping organisations including WADA and the ICC **DO NOT** endorse supplements.
- Also, some manufacturers may choose to have select batches of their supplement product(s) tested for Prohibited Substances and provide assurances that the tested products are safe to be consumed by athletes. Please be very careful, as an initial batch or specific batches of the supplement product may have proved to be safe from contamination or incorrect labeling, but there is no guarantee that subsequent batches will continue to remain safe and free of contamination. In addition, these products are quite often not tested for all Prohibited Substances on the WADA Prohibited List.
  - Finally, and most importantly, is the risk of a possible Anti-Doping Rule Violation - strict liability applies under the WADA and ICC Codes which means that every athlete is responsible for what is present in his/her body. If a Prohibited Substance is found in an athlete's body, it is not necessary for the athlete to show intent or fault for an anti-doping rule violation to occur. This also applies to an athlete who tests positive for a Prohibited Substance as a result of the use of a contaminated supplement. An anti-doping rule violation resulting from the use of a contaminated or poorly labeled supplement product may result in ban from participation in the sport.

Athletes who use supplements take big risks and are potentially placing confidence in a product's marketing claims that are most likely to be untrue and exaggerated.

The risk of a positive test, or negative health effects is significant and must be taken into serious consideration when an athlete decides whether or not to use supplements.

#### **CAN THE ICC OR WADA ENDORSE A SUPPLEMENT AS SAFE FOR USE BY ATHLETES?**

NO. The ICC and WADA are not involved in testing of dietary or nutritional supplements and **do not endorse** supplement products.

#### **HOW CAN I MINIMIZE MY RISKS, IF I CHOOSE TO USE SUPPLEMENTS?**

An Athlete must take a careful and proactive approach when choosing to take supplements. There have been numerous cases throughout sport of positive drug tests arising from the use of supplements.

The ICC's clear position is that athletes do not need to use supplements. The ICC therefore does not advocate the use of supplements in the sport. However, where, despite this an athlete is still considering taking a supplement, an athlete should make an informed decision by considering the need for the supplement and the risk associated with using the supplement. Supplements may claim to be free of any Prohibited Substances, but remember that it is impossible to know that for certain, therefore, prior to taking a supplement athletes should :

- bear in mind the advice and information contained in this advisory note;
- seek advice from a qualified and competent sports nutritionist, sports dietician or sports doctor to assess the need for a supplement;
- consider making changes to your diet, lifestyle and training before deciding on the use of supplements;
- exercise extreme caution, in particular, with products bought over the internet as you cannot be sure of where they came from, or with products that advertise muscle building and fat burning;
- do not assume a product to be safe just because it is termed 'herbal or natural';
- always use the help of a qualified medical doctor to check the list of ingredients carefully against the prohibited substances on the current WADA Prohibited List (available on the anti-doping section of the

ICC website ([www.icc-cricket.com](http://www.icc-cricket.com)) and other substances with a similar chemical structure or biological effect;

- be wary of purchasing supplements on the internet. Many sites appear and disappear overnight;
- check if the supplement batch you choose to use has been tested by an appropriately accredited laboratory to minimize the risk of it containing prohibited substances. Note, however, that just because one part of the batch has been found to be free of any contamination this is no guarantee that the rest of the batch, or any other batches, are clean.

Note: The above information will only assist in minimizing NOT eliminating the risk related to the use of supplements. Extreme caution is advised with regard to the use of supplements.

**REMEMBER, CONSUMPTION OF ANY SUPPLEMENT WILL ALWAYS REMAIN AT THE ATHLETE'S RISK. IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT TAKE IT!**