



A GUIDE TO SUPPLEMENTS IN SPORTS - MESSAGES FOR COACHES

Coaches are often sought out to provide information on a range of areas as athletes strive to perform to their best. One of these includes the use of supplements.

It is important for all athletes, but particularly those that are still growing and developing, to be encouraged to meet their nutritional needs through whole food and fluids first and foremost. There is no substitute for a well-designed, individualised nutrition plan for all athletes.

An expert such as an Accredited Sports Dietitian is able to assess the need for supplements for an individual in the context of their overall diet, medical history, stage of growth and development and the athlete's sport/event specific training and competition performance needs.

Many national sporting organisations have their own supplement policies for members. Always refer to these in the first instance.

"Supplements" is a broad term that includes;

- **Medical supplements** - such as vitamins and minerals used to treat a known deficiency (e.g. Iron)
- **Sports foods** - which may provide nutrients in a convenient format where whole foods are less practical/desirable (e.g. sports gels, protein bars, protein powders)
- **Ergogenic Aids** - which may or may not be found in food, and are taken for the express purpose of gaining a performance advantage e.g. creatine, caffeine.

For more information on these, check out the [AIS Sports Supplement Framework](#).

The number one goal is to maintain the safety, health and well-being of athletes, by ensuring all supplements recommended for use, are safe, legal, ethical and that their use is based on sound scientific and/or medical evidence.

It is the individual responsibility of the athlete to ask themselves the following:

Safe Supplement Checklist

- **Is it Safe?** Are all the ingredients in the product safe for human consumption?
- **Is it Legal?** Does it contain ingredients or substances banned under the WADA Code? Individual ingredients listed on products can be checked on Global Drug Reference Online ([Globaldro](#)) which provides information on the prohibited ingredients (and medications).
- **Is it batch tested?** Has the product been independently batch tested and is free from contaminants/ingredients that may cause a positive doping test? Independent testing organisations such as [HASTA](#) and [Informed Sport](#) offer certification programs for supplement companies. Their websites contain lists of certified products, and you can look for these certified logos on products as a way of lowering your risk of consuming a banned substance. Athletes are also advised to download the ASADA app which is a great resource and contains an easy to use medication and supplement checker.
- **Will it work for me?** Once you know it is safe and legal, it is important to seek individual guidance on the best protocol for its use from an expert.

Further Information



[Check Your Substances - Globaldro](#)



[ASADA Education on Supplements](#)



[HASTA](#)



[Informed Sport](#)

