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Minimizing the Risk: Supplement Guidelines for the High Performance Athlete

In 2010, the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) reported 30 doping violations for positive drug tests. A review of doping violation statistics in Canada from 2007-2011 indicates a growing trend of positive tests due to inadvertent doping, an unintentional violation of the World Anti-Doping Code. Each year there are changes to the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) Prohibited list and it is each athlete's responsibility to be aware of the banned substances and ingredients on this list. Although supplements are not included on the WADA Prohibited List, contaminated supplements are generally the cause of inadvertent doping infractions. Fortunately there are many resources available for athletes to learn about safe supplementation choices.

Thinking About Using A Supplement?

The promise of improved performance can be very enticing; however, the decision about whether to use a supplement requires careful consideration and should only be made in consultation with your coach, dietitian, physician and/or physiologist. Further, it is imperative all other areas of performance development are maximized prior to integrating supplementation into your sport nutrition plan. If you are an athlete under the age of 18, it is unlikely you will have reached your performance potential and so you should avoid all supplements with the exception of sport drinks and a healthy diet.

The following guidelines are recommended for athletes and coaches to take into consideration prior to supplementation:

- Have you completed a nutrition assessment with a registered dietitian?
- Have you thoroughly considered the pros and cons associated with supplement use?
- Have you discussed the need for supplementation with your coach and if so, have they approved the decision?
- Prior to taking supplements, have you outlined a protocol of use with your sport physiologist and/or dietitian?
- Have you trialed the supplements in training and several minor competitions before use in a major competition?

More important than all of the guidelines listed above, you must be aware of the potential risk of undeclared ingredients in a supplement that may lead to a positive doping outcome. To reduce the risk of inadvertent doping associated with dietary supplementation, it is strongly recommended to only purchase the brand names recommended by your Canadian Sport Centre service provider and only batches that have been tested by a third party WADA accredited lab such as HFL or NSF.

Has Your Supplement Been Tested?

Safe and effective supplementation starts with well-informed decisions. The team at CSC Pacific has gathered relevant and reliable resources that can assist in your supplementation strategy:

1. NSF Certified for Sport: online resource for tested supplements at nsfsport.com
2. HFL Informed Choice: online resource for tested supplements at informed-choice.org
3. Global DRO: search the online drug reference database for medications and other products
4. CSC Pacific Sport Dietitians: Ask a Registered Dietitian Tool at cscpacific.ca
5. Infnit Nutrition Custom Fuel Program: batch-tested supplements available at infnitnutrition.ca
6. CSC Pacific Athlete Health and Performance Handbook: Hard copy and electronic versions available for registered athletes.

Please Note:

CSC Pacific, CSC Calgary and CSC Ontario have batch-tested a group of nutrition supplements through HFL labs to ensure the lowest risk of supplement contamination. However, since not every supplement container from a tested batch was tested in a WADA lab, there is still a small risk of potential supplement contamination. Therefore, the Canadian Sport Centres are not responsible or liable if an athlete tests positive as a result of taking dietary supplements.

For more information on these products, please contact your local Athlete & Coach Services Coordinator.

Supplements to AVOID:

- **Herbal Products:** Poorly regulated and thus a lack of quality and ingredient control.
- **Animal Extracts:** This includes adrenals, testes and colostrums. Athletes may metabolize these products such that they in a way that will elevate testosterone levels beyond legal limits.
- **Fat Burning or Weight Loss Products:** Often contain banned stimulants.