



THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

## What is a dietary supplement?

A dietary supplement is a pill, capsule, tablet, powder, liquid or other food form intended to supplement a whole food diet by providing any combination of the following:

- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Amino acids
- Herbs and botanicals (leaves, bark, stems, berries, roots, seed of plants)

Sports supplements are a classification of dietary supplements, often designed to have an “ergogenic benefit” by increasing nutrient intake, lean mass, energy levels, or recovery.



**Current dietary intake from food sources must be evaluated to help improve any nutritional deficiencies or inadequacies before supplementation should be considered.**

## What to keep in mind when choosing to take a supplement?

Dietary supplements are not regulated by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA), creating concerns about purity, safety and efficacy. Supplements may contain banned substances even if unlisted on the label or ingredients may adversely interact with medication. Common ingredients in sport supplements (e.g. stimulants, amino acids) increase the risk of contamination with harmful or banned substances. To protect yourself from a positive drug test, leaving yourself ineligible for competition choose **food first** or select supplements with a Third Party Testing certification (*see below*).

### ***Dietary supplements do have a purpose...***






- They may help improve nutrient deficiencies (as identified by a diet assessment and/or blood analysis) to a greater degree than food sources
- They may help to increase intake of essential nutrients, after improvements in dietary sources have already been made
- They may offer necessary or efficient nutrient delivery when food sources are limited

## Educate yourself before making decisions ([www.USADA.org](http://www.USADA.org))

- There is a variable level of risk associated with supplement use. Vitamins and minerals produced by reputable pharmaceutical companies especially those tested by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organization are less likely to be associated with inadvertent drug tests, but there is no guarantee.
- Follow a dietary plan that allows you to adapt to training to maximize your performance. Dietary alterations may replace the need for any particular supplement.
- Consult with a Sport Dietitian or professional who is familiar with the WADA Prohibited List before taking supplements.
- Be aware, supplements which claim fat burning/weight loss and pre-workout mixtures are more likely to be contaminated with anabolic steroids, stimulants, and other contaminants. Always remember that there are no quick fixes for improving sports performance.
- Do not take a supplement just because a teammate or a competitor is taking it or recommends it.
- Do not take any supplements that make claims that sound too good to be true. Always validate product claims through non-biased sources.

## Common Third Party Testing Groups and Their Testing Measures

Third party testing groups are companies that conduct various levels of screening to promote safety and reduce your risk for testing positive for prohibited substances (listed on the WADA Prohibited List). A dietary supplement should be tested for **WADA Prohibited Banned Substances** for it to be considered for use. However, just because a product is tested, does not mean it is appropriate for use in all circumstances. Third party groups have varying levels of detection and numbers of substances or analytes that they test for in each product.

Measures					
Random GMP Audits	✓	✓		✓	✓
ISO 17025 Certified Lab		✓		✓	✓
# of Screened WADA Banned Substances			60+	146	165+
Toxicology Assessment	✓	✓			✓
Testing of Raw Materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Label Verification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Analytes are varying forms of the same ingredient that act in the same way

*Athlete Recommendations:*