

Supplements

The term supplement covers a range of products. It can refer to vitamins and minerals, natural food supplements, meal replacements, sports food and fluid and nutritional ergogenic aids. In general, the supplement industry is poorly regulated, though highly marketed to the public. Supplement companies often make claims that are exaggerated or suggest unproven benefits.

The supplement industry is regulated differently across individual countries. This often results in the contents varying from batch to batch and can lead to contamination with a prohibited substance. Alternatively, companies may not list all the ingredients on the packaging or the correct amounts and in some cases intentionally include prohibited substances.

ASADA recommends athletes do not take any supplements. ASADA cannot advise on any specific supplement or batch of supplements at any time. Athletes who use supplements are at risk of committing inadvertent doping.

Athletes are ultimately responsible for any substance found in their body regardless of how it got there. There have been many cases where both Australian and International athletes have been sanctioned after using contaminated supplements.

There are a number of steps athletes can take to reduce the risks associated with supplement use. SMA has developed a Supplements Checklist to help athletes when evaluating the risks and benefits associated with supplements. The checklist can be found in the supplement section of the Drugs in Sport website, bedrugfree.sma.org.au.

