A Guide to Dietary Supplements

My teammates say dietary supplements can help me build muscle, recover faster and improve my performance.

Are supplements necessary? Are any safe, effective and consistent with NCAA rules?

A balanced diet gives most athletes more than enough nutrients. If you are considering supplements, remember that contamination and poor manufacturing can lead to accidental use of banned substances and put your eligibility at risk.



GETTING STARTED

- A thoughtful nutrition plan centered on whole foods safely provides energy and nutrients to fuel your body for its best performance.
- If you need more nutrition or fluids, add real foods to your meals first. Work with a sports dietitian or athletics health care provider on a nutrition plan tailored to you.
- Learn and follow NCAA rules on nutrition and dietary supplements.

For supplement questions, contact the school health care provider responsible for supplement safety, usually a registered dietitian (RD), physician or athletic trainer.

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ASSESSING A DIETARY SUPPLEMENT

- Supplements carry inherent risks. Student-athletes who choose to use them may lower those risks by selecting products certified by a third party.
- Third-party programs use different quality checks. These may include reviewing manufacturing, assessing product quality and verifying that labels accurately list ingredients without harmful contaminant levels.
- Student-athletes remain accountable for everything they consume. Products with third-party testing or a lower risk may be options, but none can remove every risk. The responsibility remains yours.
- Your school's health care provider can help verify that a product you are considering has some third-party certification to reduce risk.
- Be wary of promises that sound too good to be true. Warning terms include:
  - Energizer
  - Fat Burner
  - Metabolic Booster
  - Proprietary Ingredients
  - Testosterone Booster
- Products making inflated claims about energy metabolism, fat loss or muscle gain have an especially high risk of hidden banned substances.

Note: The NCAA endorses no dietary supplements. Claims that a product is "NCAA compliant" do not mean the NCAA has reviewed it.

WAYS TO STAY SAFE

- Real food, responsible training and enough rest support success without the potential consequences of using dietary supplements.
- NCAA athletes must know what they are putting into their bodies!
- Review a supplement's label with the appropriate athletics staff before taking it.

KEY FACTS

- A product's purity, safety and effectiveness are not guaranteed. Supplement makers need no premarket approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), so these qualities remain unassured.
- Poor manufacturing or contamination can put unlisted banned substances in a dietary supplement.
- Testing positive for certain banned substances may mean at least 365 days away from competition and loss of a year of remaining eligibility.
- NCAA nutrition supplement policies:
  - Permissible: athletics departments may provide these to student-athletes.
  - Impermissible: athletics departments may not provide these to student-athletes.
  - Banned: student-athletes may not use these substances.

FOOD FIRST

Plan for enough steady energy throughout the day with varied, nutrient-rich foods and adequate hydration.

- Eat a snack or meal every 3 to 4 hours to help keep blood glucose steady.
- Eat and hydrate before, during and after training.
- Choose varied, nutrient-rich foods. Include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean proteins and healthy fats for the range of macronutrients (energy, protein, carbohydrates and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) your body uses.

Food should come first, although some supplements and sports foods can make a small, useful contribution to health or performance.

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