

## UNDERSTANDING

# DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

**M**y teammates told me that if I take dietary supplements to gain muscle and recover quickly I can improve my performance.

Do I need supplements? Are there any that are safe and effective, and meet the NCAA regulations?



While some athletes may need specific dietary supplements to meet nutrient needs, most athletes consume more than adequate nutrients on a balanced diet. Athletes interested in dietary supplements need to be aware that the risk of contamination and poor manufacturing practices increase the chance of inadvertently consuming banned supplements, putting your eligibility at risk.

### WHERE TO START

- A well-designed nutrition plan based on whole foods will safely supply energy and nutrients to fuel your body most effectively for optimal performance.
- When additional nutrition and hydration are needed, first supplement your meals with real food and work with a sports dietitian to create an individualized nutrition plan.
- Know and adhere to the nutritional/dietary supplement regulations of the NCAA.

*(To better understand dietary supplements, turn the page.)*



Information presented by



**Sports,  
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[www.NCAA.org](http://www.NCAA.org)

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## EVALUATING A DIETARY SUPPLEMENT

- Use a reliable source to investigate whether or not supplement claims are true:
  - **The National Center for Drug Free Sport:**  
www.drugfreesport.com/REC  
Password: ncaa1, ncaa2 or ncaa3
  - **NCAA:**  
www.NCAA.org/drugtesting
  - **United States Anti-Doping Agency:**  
www.usada.org/supplement411
  - **International Olympic Committee:**  
www.olympic.org/ioc
- Claims that are “too good to be true” are just that. “Red-flag” terms include:
  - Energizer
  - Fat Burner
  - Metabolic Booster
  - Proprietary Ingredients
  - Testosterone Booster
- Exaggerated claims related to energy metabolism, body fat loss and muscle mass gain are especially high risk for containing an undisclosed banned substance.

Note: The NCAA does not endorse any dietary supplements; therefore, products marketed as “NCAA compliant” have not been reviewed by the NCAA.

## KNOW THE FACTS!

- Manufacturers of dietary supplements **are not** required to obtain pre-market approval from the Federal Drug Administration (FDA); therefore, there is no assurance of a product’s purity, safety or effectiveness.
- Although manufacturers are required to list all ingredients on the label, a dietary supplement **may** contain a banned substance, even if not listed, due to contamination or poor manufacturing practices.
- A positive test for banned substances can result in suspension from competition for a minimum of 365 days, and the loss of a year of remaining eligibility.
- NCAA policies regarding nutritional supplements (see NCAA Bylaw 16.5.2 for more information):
  - **Permissible:** can be provided to student-athletes by athletics department.
  - **Impermissible:** cannot be provided to student-athletes by athletics department.
  - **Banned:** substances banned for use by student-athletes.

## FOOD FIRST

- Protect your health and enhance your performance by choosing food over supplements.
- Vitamins and minerals alone have NO energy value and cannot provide the required fuel found in food.
- In general, no vitamin and mineral supplements are necessary if a student-athlete is consuming adequate energy from a variety of foods to maintain body weight.
- Supplements are expensive. A turkey sandwich contains more essential amino acids at a much lower cost than an entire bottle of amino acid supplements!



## HOW TO PLAY IT SAFE

- Eating real food, training responsibly and getting enough rest leads to success without the potential consequences of taking dietary supplements.
- As a NCAA athlete, it is your responsibility to know what you are putting into your body!
- Before consuming any supplement, review the label with your athletics department’s sports medicine staff.

The following table lists common dietary supplements used by athletes, their risks and common food sources high in these nutrients.

Supplement	Risks	Food Equivalent
<b>Multivitamin and Mineral</b>	Potential toxicity if taken in amounts greater than recommended	Meats, poultry, fish, whole grains, vegetables, fruits, beans and peas, nuts, low-fat dairy
<b>Caffeine</b>	Potential anxiety, irritability, insomnia, headaches, gastrointestinal (GI) distress	Coffee, tea, chocolate <b>Note:</b> Consumed in high quantities, these foods can result in testing positive for a banned substance.
<b>Creatine</b>	GI distress, cramps, potential contamination	Meat, poultry, fish
<b>Protein and Added Amino Acids</b>	Potential contamination	Beef, pork, chicken, fish, turkey, beans, lentils, tofu, tempeh, nuts, low-fat dairy, eggs
<b>Omega-3 Fatty Acids</b>	Potential contamination	Fatty fish (salmon), flaxseed oil, walnuts, canola oil

