



# AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SPORTS PHYSICIANS

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### POSITION STATEMENT

#### Sport Supplements

##### **Purpose and Scope**

Dietary and nutritional supplements are commonly used in sport. Increasingly, these products are used in the general community.

This position statement is designed to provide guidelines for the appropriate use of dietary and nutritional supplements. The purpose of the statement is to ensure that

- there is no threat to human safety
- use of dietary nutritional supplements is evidence-based
- individuals are not at risk of an inadvertent anti-doping rule violation
- the integrity of sport is protected

This position statement is intended for use by medical practitioners, sporting organisations, athletes and the general community.

##### **Background**

The dietary and nutritional supplements industry has grown enormously over the past decade. The industry is largely unregulated and characterised by aggressive marketing. Manufacturers often claim specific health and performance benefits of which are not supported by scientific evidence regarding efficacy or patient safety.

Sport & Exercise Medicine Physicians are required to advise organisations and individuals regarding appropriate use of supplements. ACSP is able to provide guidance to the sporting sector and the community.

##### **Issues**

In February 2013 the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) released its report into Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport. The report suggested that inappropriate practices in relation to supplementation pose a threat to the integrity of sport and potentially to the safety of individuals.

##### **Related Legislation**

The World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) Code



## **Position**

1. Sports nutrition should be founded on a well-balanced healthy diet. Supplementation is only required when such a diet is not able to satisfy the metabolic requirements of specific sporting activities.
2. All sports supplementation programs should be based on the three principles of
  - A. Athlete safety
  - B. Evidence-based science
  - C. Compliance with the WADA Code
3. Sports supplementation is not required by all high-performance athletes and is not required by the vast majority of recreational athletes in the general community. Sport supplementation should only take place on the advice of a qualified Sports Dietitian, a Sport & Exercise Medicine Physician or another medical practitioner with experience in prescription of supplements for sporting purposes.
4. Indications for individuals under the age of 18 to use dietary nutritional supplements for sporting purposes are rare. Parents and other responsible adults should seek guidance from appropriately qualified professionals before allowing children to take supplements.
5. Participation in a sports supplementation program should be voluntary.
6. Sporting organisations implementing a supplementation program should ensure that those individuals creating the program have appropriate qualifications. Ideally the organisation should have a Supplementation Panel consisting of three individuals, one of whom is a medical practitioner and one of whom is an independent member from outside the organisation. Smaller organisations without capacity for a Supplementation Panel should consider adopting policies used by agencies such as the Australian Institute of Sport. Such policies are freely available online.
7. There is no role for injections as part of a supplementation program. Injections should only be performed for the treatment of illness or injury. Injections should only be performed by a medical practitioner.
8. Sports supplements should not be used if they contravene the WADA Code. Untested or experimental substances should not be used as part of a supplementation program. Substances which are not approved for human use should not be used as part of a supplementation program.
9. Quality control in the manufacture and labelling of supplements is variable. Studies have shown contamination of some supplements with ingredients which could cause an athlete to incur an anti-doping rule violation. Extreme caution is recommended regarding supplement use.
10. Athletes need to understand that they are ultimately responsible for any substances ingested, in terms of complying with the WADA Code.
11. Administrators of sporting organisations must have appropriate governance processes in place to ensure that they remain informed at all times regarding sports supplementation practices taking place within the organisation.