



**SPORT  
IRELAND**

## Supplement use in Sport Guidelines



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ANTI-DOPING



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(Sport Ireland Anti-Doping and Sport Ireland Institute are sub-units of Sport Ireland)

## Acknowledgement

The following guideline was adapted for Sport Ireland in alignment with the position statement written under the guidance of the SENr board, with specific technical contributions from Prof. Graeme L Close, Michael Naylor and Irene Riach.

This document was endorsed by the Sport & Exercise Nutrition Interest Group (SENIG) of the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute (INDI) on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. While the jurisdiction may be different, the same principle of 'strict liability' applies to Irish athletes, as is outlined by <http://www.sportireland.ie/Anti-Doping/> and the World Anti-Doping Code (<https://www.wada-ama.org/en/resources/the-code/world-anti-doping-code>). We welcome this position statement in support of clean sport and commit to the protection of Ireland's sporting integrity against the threat of doping. This endorsement expires on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.

Dr Catherine Norton, Chair (SENIG)

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## Introduction

Sport is becoming increasingly more competitive; athletes and teams are constantly looking for ways to gain an edge over opposition. This has led to nutritional supplement use becoming common practice for many Irish athletes. A recent survey of high performance athletes by Sport Ireland found that 50% of athletes reported using nutritional supplement products. The supplements they reported using included vitamins and minerals, caffeine, protein and carbohydrate shakes (Sport Ireland 2017). Nutritional supplements can pose risks to athletes as many of the products contain prohibited substances. These substances may enter the products due to cross contamination in production or ingredients may be left off the label and written in a variety of different formats. Evidence suggests that the rate of contamination of supplements widely available to purchase in the UK, Europe and USA is between 10 and 25% (HFL, 2013).

There are some supplements available that are pharmaceutical grade. This means that the supplements are manufactured to the same grade as medicines. Pharmaceutical grade supplements marketed in the Republic of Ireland can be checked on [www.eirpharm.com](http://www.eirpharm.com) and MIMs. For ASP based in Northern Ireland and in the UK they can be checked on [www.globaldro.com](http://www.globaldro.com). The pharmaceutical grade supplement will carry less risk due to the rigors of production as a medicine. Pharmaceutical grade supplements should be prescribed where possible to athletes who are found to have a nutritional deficiency through medical evaluation for example an iron or vitamin D deficiency. Irish athletes are governed by the Irish Anti-Doping rules (<http://www.sportireland.ie/Anti-Doping/2015-Anti-Doping-Rules/> and the World Anti-Doping Code (<https://www.wada-ama.org/en/resources/the-code/world-anti-doping-code>), both of which are underpinned by the principle of "Strict Liability". This means that each athlete is solely responsible for any prohibited substance found in their body regardless of how it got there and whether there was any intention to cheat. A positive test is just one way to commit an anti-doping rule violation (ADRV), the consequences of which will be determined by the athlete's degree of fault and their intentions. The principle of 'Strict Liability' is particularly relevant where nutritional supplements are concerned, as the risk of inadvertently consuming prohibited substances is higher compared with consuming food.

When used effectively and safely, some supplements may contribute towards improvements in health and/or performance for some athletes. This may be by supporting adaptation to training, supporting immune function or injury prevention / management, or by having a direct performance enhancing effect.

## Purpose

The aim of this guideline is to provide Athlete Support Personnel (ASP) working with National Governing Bodies of sport (NGB'S) with a guide to appropriately assess the need for supplementation, assess the risk of supplementation, understand the consequences of taking supplements from an anti-doping perspective and provide practical guidelines and tools for the safe usage in order to support athletes and ASP. This document should be read in conjunction with the Sport Ireland Clean sport commitment in Appendix Four

## Legislation & World Anti-Doping Code

The World Anti-doping Code clearly states that ASP must be knowledgeable and comply with all anti-doping policies and rules. ASP should be aware that they could be sanctioned for six out of the ten Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRV) in the World Anti-Doping Code. ASP are encouraged to use their influence positively, help develop ethical behaviour, strong values and foster anti-doping attitudes amongst the athletes that they work with.

It is important that all ASP have a clear understanding of the present risks associated with advising consumption of supplements. Sport Ireland Anti-Doping gives a clear warning that recommending the use of nutritional supplements could put ASP at risk of an ADRV. The 2015 World Anti-Doping Code (2015 Code) has included two new ADRVs which are applicable to ASP;

### Complicity

ASP found to be involved in assisting or covering up an athlete's ADRV can now be sanctioned in the same way as the person who has committed the ADRV. ASP who engage in conduct which he or she knew constituted an ADRV, or knew that there was a significant risk that conduct might result in an ADRV and manifestly disregarded that risk, may be found to have intentionally committed a doping offence. The sanction from 1 January 2015 for intentional doping is four years of ineligibility to practice in sport.

### Prohibited Association

If you are an ASP who has either been found guilty of an ADRV or a criminal or disciplinary offence equivalent to an ADRV (such as providing banned substances), you will be required to inform Sport Ireland alongside any athletes or sports you are currently working with. Athletes should be reminded of strict liability and that any athlete may face a ban of up to two years if they continue to work with a banned ASP after notification.

### Other Points to Note:

ASP are not allowed to use or possess any banned substances unless for a valid medical reason. If an athlete you support who is a minor is found to have committed an ADRV, or if more than two athletes you work with have committed an ADRV, you may also be investigated by Sport Ireland

As of September 2015, WADA have published an online list of ASP found guilty of an ADRV, some with life bans on working in sport.

If an athlete fails a doping test which they believe is due to contaminated products, it is the responsibility of the athlete to provide evidence that:

- The product was contaminated

- They have undertaken due diligence before taking the product i.e. was the product tested and part of a programme such as Informed-Sport.

Thus, whilst the legal responsibility falls to the athlete themselves, a key role of the ASP is to ensure that comprehensive and up to date advice is provided to the athlete and the wider team. It is therefore imperative that the ASP is aware of all updates to the Prohibited List. The Prohibited List as a minimum is updated annually with changes coming into effect on 1 January each year, although the List can be updated at any time. It should be noted that there is a three month advance notice period of any changes to the List, alongside any associated developments within the World Anti-Doping Code. Sport Ireland strongly advises all ASP to ensure they are up to date with any wider legislation relating to the production or manufacture of supplement products.

### **Key Points for Consideration and Application**

Reported contamination rates of nutritional supplements currently sit around 10-25%.

Supplement producers conform to different manufacturing standards than the production of pharmaceutical medicines. Supplements which have been batch tested help to minimise the risk, an example of a batch testing programme is Informed-Sport.

Irish Athletes are bound by the principle of Strict Liability within the World Anti-Doping Code.

## Is Supplementation necessary?

Athletes are constantly surrounded by marketing and pressures from peers and ASP to consider supplement usage for a performance edge. The main risks associated with supplements are; the product contains prohibited substances, contamination to the raw ingredients, cross contamination in the manufacturing process ingredients not listed on the label or labelled under a different name and the risk of buying a counterfeit product, particularly when purchased online. It is essential that athletes and ASP effectively “assess the need” for supplements prior to use. As with any intervention in sport the decision to use supplements should stem from a health or performance question, not a marketing claim.

Nutrition solutions should be constructed with a “food first” mind-set to avoid the use of any unnecessary supplements which may increase the risk of committing an ADRV. It is proposed that the most suitable support personnel to advise on supplement use are those who are registered with a suitable accreditation body (e.g. SENr or INDI). Such practitioners have had to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate supplement usage and safety as part of their registration process.

Sport Ireland recommends that support personnel advising on athletes on supplement use should hold the following qualifications:

An undergraduate degree in nutrition or dietetics with a recognised post-graduate qualification in a Sport and Exercise related subject (e.g. sports nutrition, exercise physiology, sports science) **OR** an undergraduate degree in a Sport Science related subject with a recognised post-graduate qualification in nutrition or sports nutrition.

### Key Points for Consideration and Application

Consideration of supplement use should stem from performance/health questions, not marketing claims i.e

Adopt a “food first” philosophy, not supplement first, to maximise safety and relevance.

Athletes and practitioners should seek advice from suitably qualified and registered practitioners (e.g. SENr or INDI).

Sport Ireland strongly advises against the use of supplements by minor athletes unless under medical direction for a specific health reason e.g. a nutritional deficiency

## Product identification

With research suggesting at least 10% of supplements contain traces of prohibited anabolic steroids and/or stimulants from leading European Sports Brands (HFL, 2013), athletes may be regularly exposed to supplements that may be capable of committing an ADRV. To reduce the risk of inadvertent doping, supplement testing schemes such as Informed-Sport have been developed to batch-test products for prohibited substances, in accordance with the WADA Prohibited List (<http://list.wada-ama.org/>). All products used by athletes should be batch-tested for prohibited substances using a risk minimisation scheme such as Informed-Sport (<http://www.informed-sport.com/>).

Sport Ireland recommends athletes use companies that manufacture to ISO9001 standard. This means the company manufacturers to a high standard and there is quality and traceability within the company's manufacturing procedures. An ISO accreditation does not replace batch testing for prohibited substances it is just a mark of quality in terms of manufacturing procedures.

**NB:** On some occasions supplement companies have been found to incorrectly use the Informed Sport and Informed Choice logos. This may be a blatant disregard of the logo by a company, or may be inappropriate early use of the logo prior to final test results being confirmed by Informed Sport. As such, we strongly recommend that all athletes and practitioners check that the products, and batches of supplements they plan to use, have been through the Informed Sport testing programme. This can be done easily by visiting the following webpage: [http://www.informed-sport.com/supplement\\_search](http://www.informed-sport.com/supplement_search)

### Key Points for Consideration and Application

Ensure products are batch-tested for prohibited substances to reduce the risk of contamination (e.g. Informed-Sport).

Use products from suppliers who manufacture to ISO9001 standards

Research traceability of products to ensure ingredients are from quality sources and manufactured to the highest standards.

## Practical Advice

Recognising that athletes will seek advice, ASP should take significant caution when offering advice, taking steps to protect athletes and themselves. The flowchart in Appendix One is suggested as a useful reference tool to guide discussions with athletes.

ASP's who are registered with SENr or INDI should be considered a vehicle of information given their understanding and practical experience in this field. Registrants can support athletes to make this informed decision by following the approach of:

- Assess the need (i.e. is the gap in performance nutrition related?)
- Assess the risk (is the supplement batch-tested, is it on Informed-Sport?)
- Assess the consequences (4yr ban from sport, loss of income from sponsors, removal from training group, loss of reputation, impact on friends and family)

If after careful consideration of the above points, the athlete wishes to use a supplement the ASP must carefully document this discussion and actions arising as this could form part of their defence should an ADRV occur. Sport Ireland would recommend that athlete records are kept for a minimum of 10 years in line with retrospective anti-doping testing protocols.

Current thinking on best practice of supplement procurement entails an evidence trail of the research carried out by the athlete

Irish athletes are advised to do the following before consuming a supplement

- You **MUST** undertake thorough internet research of any supplement products before it is consumed.
- This search should include the name of the product and the ingredients/substances listed.
- Information revealed as a result should be further investigated and we advise athletes to **keep evidence of their research.**
- Screen shots should be taken and the results saved in a folder. All saved information should be backed up.

[www.informed-sport.com](http://www.informed-sport.com) is a risk minimisation tool that can be used to access supplements that have been batch tested

The athlete should ensure they have a copy of the valid informed-sport certificate and store it electronically or in paper format for 10 years.

**NB:** It is crucially important that this risk assessment (found in Appendix Two) is carried out for each new batch of products purchased to ensure that the athlete is protected.

Once the product arrives it is important to check that the batch certificate matches the supplement purchased. A sample of each batch tested product is stored by the anti-doping laboratory for the shelf life of that particular batch. It is then the athlete's choice whether to keep a sample of the batch tested supplement longer if deemed necessary, bearing in mind that retrospective anti-doping testing of blood or urine can be carried out for a period of up to 10 years post collection. It is also worth considering the use of a disclaimer with athletes to ensure that "strict liability" is fully understood by the athlete. An example disclaimer can be seen in Appendix Three.

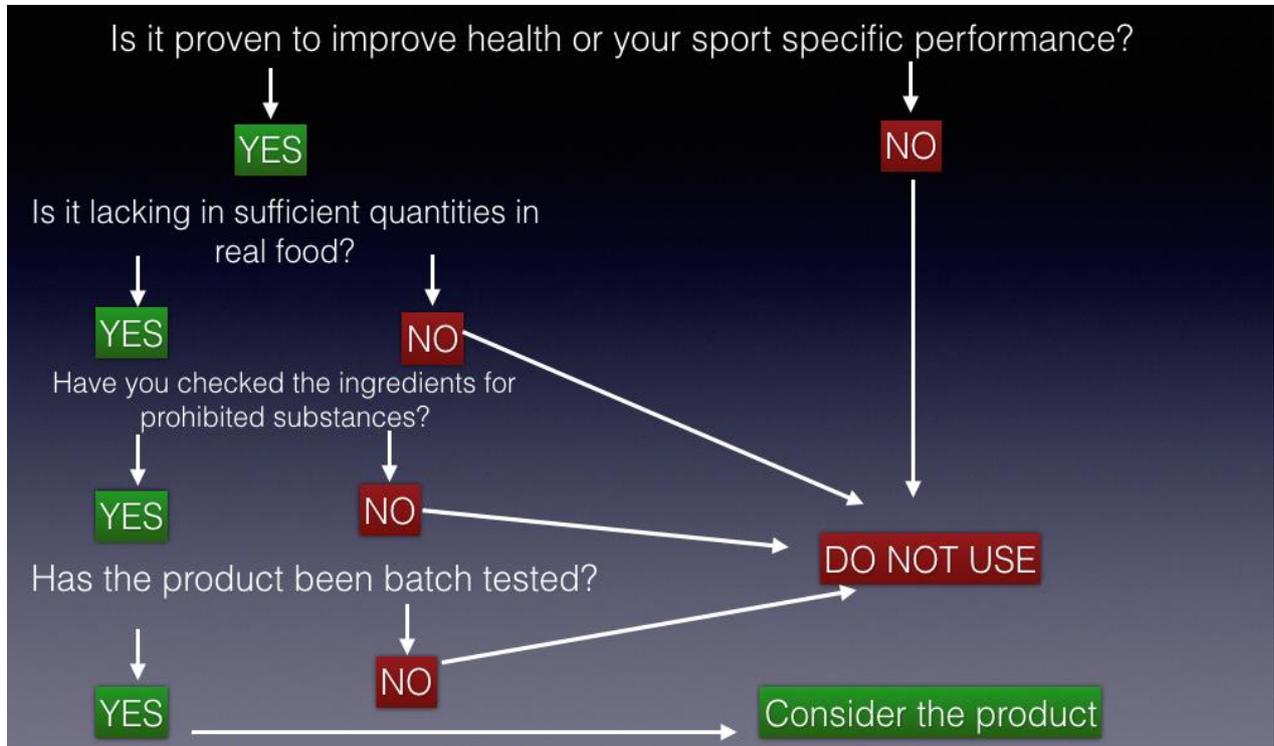
### Key Points for Consideration and Application

ASP should exercise caution when offering advice on supplements to athletes and coaches, and should take steps to protect themselves and the athlete they are supporting.

Sport Nutritionists whom are registered with SENr or INDI can provide advice to enable an athlete to make an informed decision in the area of nutritional supplements and food intake.

SEnr/INDI practitioners should pay particular attention to the guidance on note taking for best practise examples, as these notes may be used as evidence in the event of an ADRV.

## Appendix One: Supplement Decision Making Flowchart



## Appendix Two: Supplement Checklist

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Name of Product   |                 |
| Is this supplement prescribed?  | YES/ NO/ UNSURE |
| If no, why are you considering this product?                                  |                 |
| Is it on the Informed-Sport list?   | YES/NO/UNSURE   |
| Manufacturer  |                 |
| Batch number  |                 |
| Have you access to the batch test certificate?                                |                 |
| Have you researched the ingredients listed and kept records of your research? |                 |
| Comments on the ingredients   |                 |
| Are there risks of contamination?   |                 |
| What claims are made on the packaging?  |                 |
| Is there any research to support this product will improve performance?       |                 |
| Are there any health risks with taking this product?                          |                 |
| Why are you considering this product?   |                 |
| Are there any food alternatives that would also be worth considering?         |                 |
| Are you going to use this product? If so can you summarise your rationale?    |                 |

## Appendix Three: Nutrition Supplement Disclaimer

SURNAME:

FIRST NAME:

DOB:

SPORT:

ADDRESS:

I am aware that there is a difference between a prescribed supplement from a medically qualified physician resulting from blood analysis and that of a potentially performance enhancement supplements.

I am aware that [insert organisation name] does not supply athletes with nutritional supplements and that any athlete who chooses to use such products does so at their own risk and accepts full responsibility

Advice on nutritional supplements is available from \_\_\_\_\_ [Insert SENr/INDI registered nutritionists name] ensuring high level athletes receive appropriate and evidence-based information. This enables athletes to make an informed choice.

I hereby confirm that I would like to use nutritional supplement products. I understand the risk of contamination with substances included in the list of banned substances published by WADA and I take full responsibility for my decision and accept all liability for sourcing, purchasing, and consuming any nutritional supplements.

Athlete's signature:

DATE:

SEnr/INDI Nutritionist's signature:

DATE:

## Appendix Four: Clean Sport Commitment Statement



Sport Ireland recommends all NGB's in receipt of funding make and publish a commitment to Clean Sport. Organisations are therefore requested to:

- 1) Complete the sample template below
- 2) Approve its contents by the Board of the NGB
- 3) Publish it on the organisation website
- 4) Display it prominently in organisation premises.

### CLEAN SPORT COMMITMENT TEMPLATE

**All sporting participants have the right to compete in Clean Sport. [Organisation Name] adopts the Sport Ireland and World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) position that cheating, including doping, in sport is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport, undermining the otherwise positive impact of sport on society.**

**To this end [Organisation Name] commits to support Clean Sport in Ireland in the following ways:**

- [Organisation Name] supports the mission of Sport Ireland and WADA in achieving clean sport
- All athletes are expected to play, train and compete in line with the spirit of sport, including the anti-doping rules
- All coaches and athlete support personnel are expected to perform their role in line with the spirit of sport, including the anti-doping rules

- [Organisation Name] is committed to supporting the prevention of doping behaviour in Ireland in collaboration with other sporting bodies
- Employed and associated staff will not condone, assist or in any way support the use of prohibited substances and methods (unless permitted by a Therapeutic Use Exemption) in any aspects of their work
- All [Organisation Name] ASP, whether professionally employed, contracted or volunteer, will be expected to contact Sport Ireland Anti-doping Unit should they become aware of an athlete or NGB member using or considering the usage of a prohibited substance or prohibited method. This contact should be done in confidence on the dedicated confidential Report Doping in Sport <https://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Anti-Doping/Report-Doping/>
- [Organisation Name] will uphold any sanctions placed upon an athlete by Sport Ireland or other associated body in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code

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## Useful Links

<http://www.informed-sport.com/>

<https://www.wada-ama.org/>

[https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/prohibited\\_list\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/prohibited_list_2018_en.pdf)

<https://www.mims.ie/>

<http://www.senr.org.uk/>

<http://www.sportireland.ie/Anti-Doping/>

[www.eirpharm.com](http://www.eirpharm.com)