

Advisory Notice

Supplements

National Associations should ensure that their players, coaches, medical staff, advisors, employees, agents, representatives or any individuals connected with their organization or tennis are aware of the issues surrounding dietary supplements.

Supplements mean risk.

NO REGULATION

Dietary supplements can contain banned substances. In April 2002 the International Olympic Committee issued a report that revealed that of 634 supplements tested, 94 (14.8%) contained unlabeled substances that would have led to a positive doping test. In addition to these 94 a further 66 (10.4%) returned borderline results for various unlabeled substances.

Regulation of the manufacture and distribution of supplements is limited and there is consequently no guarantee of either content or accurate labelling. The contents of particular products may change from batch to batch and labels do not always indicate all of the ingredients. Nor do they always do so in a way that identifies prohibited substances. It is not possible for the ITF or any other organization to guarantee the safety and legality of any supplement.

The connection between dietary supplements and positive test results for banned substances has been widely reported for a number of years. High-profile international athletes in a number of sports have tested positive because they have used dietary supplements. Athletes (and their coaches, trainers and doctors) can no longer credibly claim ignorance of the risks of positive test results due to use of dietary supplements. Athletes use dietary supplements at their own risk of testing positive and committing a doping infraction.

ENHANCED PERFORMANCE?

Very few claims of enhanced performance through supplement use are confirmed by valid research. Good marketing is not a guarantee of a good product. Remember that a primary motivation for most people wishing to sell dietary supplements is to make a profit.

Appropriate training and diet are the key ingredients to maximizing performance.

NUTRITIONAL SUBSTANCES

Nutritional Supplements are being increasingly used worldwide in the sports community. In sports subjected to drug testing, the ingestion of these supplements pose a special risk because they may contain or they may be contaminated with substances that are specifically banned by the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme. Unlike prescription medications, in which the purity of the product can typically be verified by governmental regulatory authorities, the purity of supplements is at best uncertain and therefore the risk of testing positive in a doping test must be borne by the consumer who uses supplements.

THE WORLD ANTI-DOPING AGENCY (WADA)

WADA warned against the use of so-called 'nutritional substances' such as dietary supplements. The WADA position is reproduced below.

Should you require further information related to this Advisory Notice, please contact the ITF

WADA position on the Use of Nutritional Supplements

WADA believes that elite athletes can and should meet the nutritional needs of a grueling training regimen through a healthy, balanced diet. There is no conclusive scientific evidence that demonstrates supplements provide significant benefit to an elite athlete.

Because WADA is concerned about inadequate labeling and insufficient quality control in the production of many nutritional supplements, the agency recommends elite athletes do not take nutritional supplements.

Doping control authorities cannot judge intent; they can only judge what is found in the body. Ultimately, athletes are responsible for what they ingest, so it is possible that the use of some nutritional supplements could lead to an athlete being found guilty of a doping offense.

It is WADA's position that taking a poorly labeled nutritional supplement should not be regarded as an adequate defense in a doping hearing.