

ATHLETE ADVISORY

CCES Advises Beijing-Bound Athletes on Supplement Use

(Ottawa, Ontario – August 5, 2008) – In the period leading up to the 2008 Games in Beijing efforts have been made by some supplement manufacturing companies to promote the use of IOC or WADA ‘approved’ supplements. The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) reminds athletes, coaches and all other support personnel participating in the upcoming Games that the IOC and WADA do not certify supplements and, in fact, both organizations strongly discourage their use.

Canadian athletes are looking to the CCES and other sport authorities to provide them with advice concerning supplement products. Their main interest is avoiding an inadvertent anti-doping rule violation due to mislabelling or contamination. There are clear and well known risks associated with supplement use. As a timely warning for Canadian athletes to do all that they can to avoid the risk of an inadvertent anti-doping rule violation the CCES is re-issuing this Athlete Advisory regarding the risks associated with supplement use.

It is important to understand that this advice from the CCES cannot *eliminate* the risk of inadvertent doping. Instead, it is aimed at increasing the athlete’s awareness regarding supplements and *reducing the risk* of inadvertent doping associated with supplement use.

Athletes must know that pursuant to relevant anti-doping rules they are ultimately responsible for all substances that are found in their bodies. This principle of ‘strict liability’ has consistently been upheld in order to protect the integrity of sport and the effectiveness of the world-wide anti-doping effort. Therefore, the decision to use supplements must be taken carefully and not made in isolation. It is the position of the CCES that unless an athlete actually needs supplements, the athlete should not take them.

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Athletes who do elect to consume supplements, knowing the risks involved and their personal responsibility for such risks, may reduce the danger of an inadvertent anti-doping rule violation by taking these actions:

1. Always seek professional advice about the actual need for supplementation and suitable supplement choices before deciding to use a supplement. Team physicians and sport nutritionists are excellent resources in this regard and can be contacted through your sport organization or Canadian Sport Centre. If these professionals are not available to you, you should seek advice from a pharmacist. Always make sure the professional is aware of the risks associated with supplement use and reviews the *World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Prohibited List* before providing advice. The CCES' Substance Classification Handbook applies the WADA list to the Canadian market, and can be downloaded at www.cces.ca/pdfs/CCES-PUB-SubstanceClassification-E.pdf.
2. Consider very carefully whether you actually need to use a supplement by determining if you have other safer options such as making changes to your diet or nutrition program.
3. Never use a supplement just because a teammate or competitor is using it or recommends it.
4. Don't start or change a supplement regime in the run-up to a major competition.
5. Supplements fall into a wide spectrum of types with the level of risk of contamination being lower at one end of the spectrum and higher at the other. Vitamins and minerals usually (but not always) warrant less concern regarding mislabelling or inadvertent contamination by a prohibited substance than those supplement products at the high end of the spectrum that are not dietary replacements and that rely on claims related to performance benefits (e.g., muscle building, fat burning). Examples of substances that are prohibited and that continue to appear in supplements from time to time are: DHEA, Ephedrine, Androstenedione/diol, Amphetamines, and Ma Huang.
6. There is always an increased risk of inadvertent doping when supplements are purchased through non-traditional means such as: over the internet, through magazines or directly from a non-licensed supplier. The problem is that the manufacturer of the supplement is unknown. Products purchased from a trusted retailer or directly from a reputable manufacturer are likely to be associated with a lower risk of mislabelling or contamination. Determine if the manufacturer of

the supplement produces any other products containing substances found on the WADA Prohibited List. If so, there will certainly be a higher risk of cross-contamination between these different products. Recent research indicates that it is very difficult to eliminate the risk of cross-contamination in a manufacturing plant. Given a choice of suppliers, always select a product from a reputable company that also manufactures licensed pharmaceuticals over one that is new or unknown.

7. Always follow the recommended dosage and route of administration as indicated on the product label. Be especially cautious of potential negative interactions if consuming more than one supplement product at a time. Use supplement products like you would any over-the-counter medication. If the recommended dose is one tablet, two or more may be unhelpful, counter-productive or even dangerous.
8. Keep a log of your supplement use (like your training log), including the product's manufacturer, all contact details, the batch or lot numbers of the product and when they were consumed. Always keep some of the contents from each container of supplements in case a problem arises that requires the product to be investigated. Although keeping this information will not be deemed as a valid defence in the case of an anti-doping rule violation, it may provide you with sufficient evidence to seek compensation from the manufacturer.
9. In all cases when you decide to consume a supplement, directly contact the supplement manufacturer to find out if the manufacturer is prepared to stand behind its product in the event it causes an anti-doping rule violation. Ask these questions: Does the manufacturer offer any form of guarantee or compensation if its product causes an anti-doping rule violation? Does the manufacturer rigorously test their supplements? Is the manufacturer's testing to WADA standards and does the testing cover all *Prohibited List* substances? Does the testing match WADA criteria for reporting thresholds? What proof does the manufacturer require to qualify for compensation? If the manufacturer does offer a certification or guarantee, always obtain a letter of confirmation signed by a senior official from the company. If the manufacturer does not offer a certification or guarantee, seriously consider not using that product.

The CCES is an independent, national, non-profit organization. Our mission, to foster ethical sport for all Canadians, is carried out through research, promotion, education, detection and deterrence, as well as through programs and partnerships with other organizations.

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