

ADVISORY NOTE

Banned Hair Loss Drug Can Lead to Sanctions

(Ottawa, Ontario – February 11, 2008) – The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) would like to warn athletes to avoid the use of finasteride, a prohibited substance which is currently sold in Canada under the brand names Propecia and Proscar. Commonly used to treat hair loss in men, finasteride has led to two doping violations in Canada and the United States in the last three years. The CCES strongly recommends that athletes subject to doping control do not take finasteride, as it will result in an anti-doping rule violation.

This substance has been on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Prohibited List since January 1, 2005. It is prohibited under the category S5, Diuretics and Other Masking Agents. Finasteride can be a masking agent, as its presence can interfere with sample analysis.

Starting with the 2008 version of the Prohibited List, finasteride is also a “specified substance.” This classification recognizes that finasteride is particularly susceptible to an *unintentional* anti-doping rule violation because of its general availability in medicinal products. A violation involving a “specified substance” may result in a reduced sanction if an athlete can establish that its use was not intended to enhance sport performance.

To date, the CCES has never approved a therapeutic use exemption (TUE) for finasteride. The Canadian Anti-Doping Program states that, for a TUE to be granted, *“the athlete would experience a significant impairment to health if the Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method were to be withheld in the course of treating an acute or chronic medical condition.”* This condition has never been satisfactorily met as finasteride is generally prescribed for aesthetic purposes.

Again, the CCES strongly recommends that athletes subject to doping control do not take finasteride, as it will result in an anti-doping rule violation.

Related reading:

- Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport finasteride case
www.cces.ca/pdfs/CCES-MR-ViolationTheodore-E.pdf
- United States Anti-Doping Agency finasteride case
http://www.wada-ama.org/rtecontent/document/CASELAW_Lund.pdf

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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