

WIAA Position Statement – Performance Enhancing Supplements

Note: This policy statement is related to use of dietary supplements. For information on steroid use, see the WIAA information addressing APEDS and Drugs in Sports.

The WIAA strongly opposes the use of supplements by high school student-athletes for performance enhancement due to the lack of published scientific research that documents the benefits and/or risks of supplement use, particularly in adolescents. Supplements should only be used on the advice of one's health care provider for health-related reasons, not for the purpose of gaining a possible competitive advantage. School personnel and coaches should never recommend, endorse, or encourage the use of any supplement, drug, or medication for performance enhancement to a student-athlete.

Products typically promoted as performance enhancing include: dietary or nutritional supplements, ergogenic aids, health supplements or sport supplements. While some mainstream supplements are made by responsible manufacturers, a growing number of products contain dangerous and hidden ingredients, including steroids and pro-hormones. In making a decision to use a supplement, several factors should be considered.

- **Evaluating Supplements for Discouraged or Banned Substances:** Supplements are not regulated like drugs, food or medication. Supplement companies do not have to follow the same "truth in labeling" regulations as for food or medication. Supplement labels are not required to list all the ingredients in the product and can omit listing ingredients that are in a bottle. A growing number of products contain dangerous and undisclosed ingredients, including steroids, stimulants and dangerous drugs. Proprietary ingredients are a "company secret" and do not have to be listed on the label. To minimize the risk of taking a supplement that contains a banned ingredient, visit the NFS Certified for Sport website <http://www.nfsport.com/> or Informed Choice <http://www.informed-choice.org/> for a listing of supplements that have been tested for purity and potency.
- **Health Consequences:** Supplement products have been known to be contaminated with banned or harmful ingredients. Taking supplements with dangerous hidden drugs such as designer steroids has been a known cause of liver injury, stroke, kidney failure, and pulmonary embolism. Supplement products with hidden stimulants can cause irregular heart rhythm, increased blood pressure, stroke, and even death.
- **Contamination:** Supplements can accidentally contain banned or discouraged ingredients due to cross-contamination when manufacturing equipment isn't cleaned properly between batches of products. In other cases manufacturers will spike a product with stimulants or pro-hormones without listing them on the label to deceive the student-athletes that the product will cause big gains while claiming the product is "all natural" or "legal."
- **Sources of information:** Supplement store staff or company distributors get paid by selling a product. They are well trained to sell the most popular product with the biggest profit margin. The staff generally may not have training in nutrition, biochemistry or pharmacology. In addition, they may not know or understand WIAA rules/regulations of supplement use by student-athletes. A supplement/product that is "legal" for the company to sell to the student-athlete, however, may not be allowed for an student-athlete to use.
- **Testimonials from professional athletes:** Supplement companies frequently advertise their products with testimonials from professional athletes or well-known sports figures. These testimonials are not proof that a supplement works. Athletes who are paid to endorse a product are generally at the end of their career and did not use the supplement when they were young and training to become successful.
- **Pre-Workout Boosters:** These products claim to provide increased energy and endurance for a workout. Supplements in this category generally contain several sources of stimulants – many not listed on the label – that affect the heart and blood pressure and can cause serious health consequences. In addition, this category of products has a history of containing hidden banned supplements, including illegal pro-hormones

and steroids. Use of pre-workout boosters has caused many athletes to fail drug tests, be suspended from competition, and has been related to several deaths.

- **Protein Powders:** Most diets supply adequate protein. However, in cases where student-athletes can't eat enough food or when protein needs are higher than normal, limited supplementation may be needed. In these cases, a physician or sport dietitian consultation may be helpful. If extra protein is needed, read labels carefully. Protein powders may contain discouraged or banned ingredients not listed on the label. A 2007 study by Informed Choice Labs randomly selected 50 protein powders off the shelves of well-known supplement stores. They found that 25% of the powders contained anabolic steroids. In addition, 11% of the protein powders tested positive for stimulants not listed on the label. Look for labels that list protein as the first ingredient, have few added ingredients and do not claim to be "mass builders".

The primary reason student-athletes choose to use supplements are to gain mass and weight, get stronger, reduce body fat, and have more energy. Student athletes who want to improve athletic performance should focus on good training strategies, a good diet, and proven recovery strategies that stress the 4 "R's": rest, refuel, rehydrate, and repair. In the vast majority of cases, a few changes to the student-athlete eating habits will lead to muscle growth, fat loss, improved strength and faster recovery

For a copy of the WIAA Performance Enhancing Supplement and Banned Substances Policy visit

<http://www.wiaawi.org/Portals/0/PDF/Health/performanceenhancers.pdf>

National Institutes of Health Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/supplements/wiseuse.htm>

True Sport Nutrition Guide <https://truesport.org/wp-content/uploads/TSNutritionGuide.pdf>

NSF Certified for Sport <http://www.nsf sport.com/>

USADA Dietary Supplement and Safety Education <http://www.usada.org/substances/supplement-411> Informed Choice <http://www.informed-choice.org/>

Drug Free Sport <http://www.drugfreesport.com/>

American College of Sport Medicine – Protein Intake for Optimal Muscle Maintenance [protein-intake-for-optimal-muscle-maintenance.pdf](http://acsm.org/protein-intake-for-optimal-muscle-maintenance.pdf) (acsm.org)

National Federation of High School Sports Supplement Position Statement [dietary-supplements-position-statement-2015.pdf](http://nfhs.org/dietary-supplements-position-statement-2015.pdf) (nfhs.org)