

## The risks of using supplements

Extreme caution is recommended regarding supplement use. A number of positive tests have been attributed to the misuse of supplements, poor labelling and contamination.

Risks of supplements include:

- **Mislabeling:** Manufacturing standards for supplements are often less strict when compared with medicines. Supplements may have ingredients wrongly listed, and prohibited substances may not be identified on the product label.
- **Contamination:** Products that contain prohibited substances may be produced in the same facility as the supplement that you are purchasing, and there is a real risk that your product may have been contaminated with prohibited substances during production.
- **Misinformation:** False claims that a particular supplement is endorsed by Anti-Doping Organizations or that it is “safe for athletes” are common in fake or low-quality supplement products. Remember, Anti-Doping Organizations do not certify supplements and the product label may contain misleading messaging.
- **Health risks:** Mislabeling, cross-contamination and misinformation may all lead to inadvertent ingestion of substances that are prohibited under the World Anti-Doping Code, and that may be harmful to health.

**When it comes to deciding whether or not to take supplements, a risk-benefit analysis is recommended. No supplement is 100% risk-free but you can take these steps to minimize the risks:**

- The first thing you should do is **determine whether a benefit to you is likely**. Are you taking a supplement because a teammate is doing the same, or because a coach heard that it may be good for you? Make sure your reason for taking a supplement is justified – that you know what need a particular supplement is fulfilling, preferably with advice from a nutritionist.
- If you decide that the benefits of taking supplements outweigh the risks, **seek out supplements that are safer to take** – products that come from reputable companies, and those that have been batch tested by independent companies not affiliated with the actual supplement producer.
- Finally, consult a medical professional (i.e., a certified nutritionist) or conduct research to **find out what dosage of the supplement you need to take** for maximum benefit.

### Checking your supplements

**Select only those supplements that have been batch-tested by an independent company. Companies that batch-test supplements include [Informed Sport](#), [Certified for Sport](#) and [Kölner Liste](#).**