COLLEGE ATHLETES AND DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

PHOTOS BY NCAA PHOTOS AND SHUTTERSTOCK

I am a catcher on the baseball team and have heard from other baseball players that taking dietary supplements will improve my strength and stamina. I have also heard that some dietary supplements may not be safe or legal.

Which ones should I use?

THE BASICS

While some athletes may benefit from taking dietary supplements, taking them does not counter the negative effects of a poor diet on physical performance. Dietary supplements are intended to address periodic shortfalls in a well-balanced diet or to support a specific need related to a changing medical condition (for example, pregnancy, anemia). They are not intended to make up for an inadequate diet. Student-athletes considering the use of a dietary supplement must realize that there is the risk of contamination, which increases the chances of unintentionally taking a banned substance, thus risking eligibility. Before considering a dietary supplement, meet with a Sports Registered Dietitian (Sports RD) or your athletic trainer to ensure you are consuming an adequate, well-balanced diet and to get guidance on NCAA rules regarding dietary supplements.

(For information on dietary supplements, turn the page.)

Information presented by NCAA SPORT SCIENCE INSTITUTE · Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutrition, a dietetic practice group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics · CPSDA Collegiate and Professional Sports Dietitians Association

KNOW THE RISKS

- Dietary supplement companies are not required to prove their products' safety, purity or effectiveness.
- Manufacturers of dietary supplements must list all ingredients on the product label; however, a dietary supplement may contain a banned substance not listed due to poor manufacturing practices or intentional adulteration.
- A student-athlete who has a positive test for a banned substance can receive a suspension for a minimum of a year plus lose a year of eligibility.
- Student-athletes who consume dietary supplements do so at their own risk, regardless of what is listed on the label.

DECODING THE REGULATIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTING SAFELY

NCAA Division I and Division II institutions passed legislation deregulating feeding, allowing institutions to provide foods to athletes with the intent of meeting student-athlete nutritional needs. This regulatory change did not affect the rule on providing dietary supplements to student-athletes. Institutions can provide student-athletes with dietary supplements that provide carbohydrate as well as protein, as long as the percentage of calories from protein does not equal or exceed 30 percent of the total calories in the product.

Because student-athletes have higher energy (caloric) needs than nonactive students, student-athlete food consumption amounts should be greater. A quick review of the "food equivalent" column in the charts below will help you identify food items that supply the same active ingredients in many dietary supplements. Meeting with a Sports RD can help you determine how much of these can support your training demands. If it is determined that you might benefit from a dietary supplement, minimize your risk by first consulting with your Sports RD or athletics department designee for supplement questions, and by using the following resources:

- **NCAA:** www.NCAA.org/drugtesting
- **The National Center for Drug Free Sport:** www.drugfreesport.com/REC password: ncaa1, ncaa2 or ncaa3
- **United States Anti-Doping Agency:** www.usada.org/substances/supplement-411/

NOTE: The NCAA does not approve or endorse any dietary supplements; therefore, products marketed as "NCAA compliant" have not been reviewed by the NCAA.

SUPPLEMENTING FUNDAMENTALS

Pre-workout

Supplement ingredient	Claims	Risks	Food equivalent
Synephrine, guarana, caffeine (stimulants)	Increases energy, stamina, alertness	Gastrointestinal (GI) distress, increased nervousness/anxiety	Coffee, tea, chocolate
Nitric oxide, L-arginine (buffers)	Improves stamina, enhances anaerobic recovery	Bloating, diarrhea, decreased blood pressure, increased sweating	Meat, dairy, nuts, beets
Creatine	Increases muscle repair efficiency and muscular strength	GI distress, bloating, cramps	Meats, fish, poultry

Recovery

Supplement ingredient	Claims	Risks	Food equivalent
Amino acids	Enhances muscle repair	Possible contamination	Meats, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, dairy, beans, tofu
Antioxidants	Neutralizes oxidative damage from training	Possible contamination	Fresh fruits and vegetables
Glucose	Replaces muscle glycogen stores	Possible contamination	Breads, cereals, fruits, dairy

Written by SCAN/CPSDA Registered Dietitians (RDs). For advice on dietary supplements, consult an RD who specializes in sports, particularly a Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD).
Find a qualified RD at www.scandpg.org or www.sportsRD.org