



## TRIATHLON CANADA POSITION ON SUPPLEMENT USE

The purpose of this statement is to provide clarity to the athletes and stakeholders of Triathlon Canada on our position regarding the use of supplements, with contributing opinions from Triathlon Canada's National network of IST, other Canadian National Sport Organization's and excerpts adopted from the ITU resource guide on Managing the Risks of Taking Nutritional Supplements (1).

The general area of supplementation and what constitutes a supplement is extremely confusing, with a lack of agreed upon definitions, and often vague interpretations of what qualifies as a food or drug. For Triathlon Canada to have a national position on supplement use within our sport, we first need to outline what we believe to be distinctions between sport foods, medication, health supplements, and ergogenic aids...all of which are forms supplementation.

### POSITION STATEMENT

Before athletes choose to use any form of supplement, they should ensure that it is from a safe, reliable, and tested source. The athlete is strictly liable (see WADA website: [www.wada-ama.org](http://www.wada-ama.org)) even when a positive test is due to inadvertent contamination. It is important to note that many supplements have been found to contain prohibited substances. More information can be found at <http://cces.ca/supplements>.

Athletes wishing to check medication status (approved or prohibited) can go to: [www.globaldro.com](http://www.globaldro.com).

### PURPOSE

No amount of supplementation can replace good food choices, appropriate meal planning, and adequately scheduled rest and recovery. Eating food is the best way to fuel your training, and adequate rest and sleep is the best way to recover and stay healthy.

### DEFINITIONS

**Supplements** are any nutrient isolated from a food such as a vitamin, mineral, amino acid, etc.; or any substance that is added to food for the purpose of augmenting or altering the nutritional content.

For the purpose of this policy, supplements can encompass:

**Sport foods** are products intended (and marketed) towards specialized nutrition for athletes and active individuals. Sports foods may consist of high-protein content, or other nutrients to support recovery, metabolism, and many other potential sport related benefits. They are typically designed for convenience, and can include bars, powders, drinks, and other forms.



The distinction between food and sport food is somewhat arbitrary in many cases, but typically: sport foods are manufactured products to provide a convenient source of basic food elements intended for quick ingestion before, during or after sports. (ie sport gels, bars, protein powders, etc)

**Medications** are something that you cannot derive from the daily food you eat. Generally, medication is intended for the treatment of a medically diagnosed illness, injury, or deficiency. This could include prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins and minerals, depending on the condition.

**Health supplements** attempt to promote a healthier state of being, and potentially prevent injury or illness. As well, health supplements can claim performance benefits by boosting the body's physical resources beyond the levels considered 'normal' in a general population. Meal replacements/additives would fall under health supplements as you are attempting to further fortify the regular foods you eat with enhanced vitamin, mineral, or other food elements. (eg. Iron supplements, vitamins, chondroitin, etc)

**Ergogenic aids** are supplements that are taken to enhance physical performance, stamina, or recovery. These are typically related to a specific performance, and often equated to the negative term 'performance enhancing drugs'. To be clear, not all ergogenic aids are banned in sport. In fact, there is some research to show potential performance benefits in swimming for a short list of perfectly legal ergogenic aids. The intent of taking these supplements is to enhance the body's potential to achieve a better performance. These are often used immediately prior to competition. (ie caffeine)

## APPLICATION

Triathlon Canada has chosen to develop and follow four fundamental principles when it comes to supplementation:

1. No Triathlon Canada directed operational budgets to the National Performance Centres (NPC), Enhanced Funding Initiatives/Athletes or Next Gen Initiatives/Athletes can be utilized to purchase supplements of any kind.
2. It is essential that all other areas of performance be maximized before considering integrating supplementation into an athlete's sport nutrition and training plan, and only under guidance of the IST.
3. Supplements may be indicated for treatment of medical diagnoses and nutritional deficiencies under physician and registered dietitian direction.
4. With the exception of sport foods, junior athletes should not utilize supplements without medical and nutritional consultation and parent/guardian consent.



5. Triathlon Canada will not pursue any sponsorship for nutritional supplement products or endorse the use of nutritional supplements through personal, partner, member or stakeholder sponsorships.

Furthermore, Triathlon Canada supports the ITU resource guide on Managing the Risks of Taking Nutritional Supplements. (1)

We believe that the best strategy is to have a solid meal plan and dietary habits so that supplementation is minimized or not required. While sport foods are a convenient source of nutrients, they do not compensate for poor food choices and inadequate dietary intake. Where an athlete has been identified as having a demonstrated deficiency of an essential food element, vitamin, or mineral, and the appropriate food is not available or adequate, then a sport food supplement may be indicated. For the most part, an adequate intake of protein can be obtained from everyday foods and good meal planning. If an athlete's training requirements exceed what can be reasonably planned for and prepared through regular meals with respect to protein intake, then protein-carbohydrate drinks or protein from a tested source are options (eg. <http://www.nfsport.com/> and <http://www.informed-choice.org>). When it comes to maintaining optimal health, the best strategy to support a healthy immune system through heavy training is to schedule the appropriate amount of rest and to meet daily nutrient requirements. While there is some research that has shown potential performance enhancing benefits in swimming for a short list of ergogenic aids, effective doses of some can be found in normal foods and drinks.

## REFERENCES

1. ITU Managing the Risk of Taking Nutritional Supplements <https://www.triathlon.org/anti-doping/education>