

TOP TIPS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES AND THEIR PARENTS

SUPPLEMENTS

“In my view students do not need to use supplements - without professional advice from the experts you are putting yourself at risk. Work hard get good nutritional advice and eat well - that will be more beneficial to you than any supplement” DJ Forbes - All Blacks 7's

A small proportion of supplements have been shown to improve health or athlete performance. However, the benefits to health and performance claimed by the majority of supplements are either highly exaggerated or completely unproven. Until the foundation of sound training, nutrition and recovery are mastered, the benefits of many supplements can be irrelevant and insignificant.

New Zealand Rugby and New Zealand Rugby Players Association supports a ‘food first’ approach to nutrition. This means that players should ensure they consume a varied, nutrient rich and complete diet based largely around whole natural foods filled with carbohydrates, protein, quality fats and micronutrients. There are some good food suggestions and smoothie recipes at the end of this document that will provide a much safer, healthier and cheaper alternative to supplements.

Risks

There are numerous risks associated with taking supplements, which generally fall into 2 categories, 1) risk to your health and 2) risk of consuming banned substances.

1. Some supplements have a low health risk for example Powerade. However others have a high health risk that includes elevated heart rate, cardiovascular problems, anxiety, insomnia, digestive problems, kidney damage, high blood pressure and dehydration. Many of the ingredients in supplements have not been tested as being safe or effective for adolescents
2. Supplements claiming to give you extra energy and/or burn fat (“pre-workouts”) and supplements claiming to build muscle (“anabolic”) in particular can be hazardous to your health causing increased heart rate and heart stress, increased blood pressure and kidney stress

3. There is also a risk that supplements may contain banned substances. These banned substances can go unchecked and undisclosed on manufacturer labelling. If you take supplements containing a banned substance you will test positive to doping and could be banned from sports for up to four years under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code

Advice

1. If you do decide to use supplements, then it is your responsibility to ensure that any supplement you take has no banned substances in its ingredients and ideally has been batch-tested to ensure no contamination. Under the WADA code, Athletes are ultimately responsible for the contents of any supplements they take. This is important to remember - especially if a trainer, coach, gym instructor etc is trying to push you to take supplements - remember you could be banned regardless of who gives you the supplement. The website informed choice <http://informed-choice.org/> provides information on supplements that have been tested for banned substances. Remember just because a supplement has no banned substances it doesn't mean it is good for you
2. If you decide to use school or team issued supplements, we recommend you ensure there is a member of the team or school management responsible for managing the teams supplements program - and record who that is. Check that they have undertaken the steps above to ensure the supplement is safe. Not all school management will have information or experience with supplements so if you have any doubts at all do not take them
3. If you decide to take a supplement then you should inform your team or school management personnel and make sure they have both seen and approved what you are intending to take. However, you should also get professional advice from a qualified sports dietician or nutritionist. Supplements are expensive and money may be better spent on getting good advice on what you need
4. Never take from, or use someone else's, supplement
5. Keep strict control over who has access to any supplements you choose to use. Never let anyone else access it
6. As part of your research into supplements make sure you visit the Drug Free Sport website (<http://drugfreesport.org.nz/supplements>), the information and risks of taking supplements will shock you. You can also call 0800 DRUGFREE for advice and support

“There is a lot of advertising out there and even athlete endorsements encouraging young athletes to take supplements - don't be fooled into thinking you need them at your age” Keven Mealamu - All Black

Alternatives

- Flavoured milk, such as chocolate milk is highly effective at rebuilding and repairing damaged muscles from exercise. Milk or flavoured milk has more electrolytes than leading sports drinks, it also contains two powerful proteins, whey and casein. Milk protein has been shown to be the most powerful protein on the planet for rebuilding muscle
- Drink milk at meals, between meals as a snack, or drink flavoured milk after training / sport for energy, extra protein and growth. Great for adding lean muscle mass
- Milk powder is a cheap alternative to whey protein and is great in smoothies - added to milk it is a cheap and safe protein powder. Milk powder contains the same proteins that supplement companies put in their whey protein, at a fraction of the cost
- Milk based breakfast drinks are a good portable energy food
- For further nutritional advice for Rugby Players including recipes visit <http://autmillennium.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/RUGBY.pdf>

Smoothie recipes

- *Recovery smoothie*: Add 3 heaped Tbsp of trim milk powder to a glass of milk and blend or stir.
- *Muscles in a glass*: In a glass or shaker pour 300ml milk, 3 Tbsp trim milk powder, and 1 Tbsp Milo. Shake or stir
- *Breakfast shake*: 300ml reduced fat milk; Handful of berries-frozen is great; 2 Tbsp Berry yoghurt; ½ banana; 1 heaped Tbsp raw oats
- *Snickers shake*: Blend together 300ml reduced fat milk, 2 tsp Milo, 1 Tbsp quality smooth peanut butter, ½ frozen banana

“There comes a time when supplements can play a positive part in a professional athletes nutritional plan - but that is only once they are part of a fully professional, ultra-demanding and well-resourced high performance setup that ensures the appropriate checks and balances are in place, and that any supplements recommended are part of a thorough and detailed nutritional management program. If you are not part of such an environment then stay away from them is my advice”

Katrina Darry - All Black Nutritionist

For further information and advice on the topic of supplements for young athletes please feel free to contact Drug Free Sport New Zealand on 0800 DRUGFREE or the New Zealand Rugby Players' Association on 0800 PLAYER

The nutritional advice included in this resource is not designed to replace that of a Registered Dietitian or Sports Nutritionist, who remain the best source of an individualised sports nutrition plan for young athletes