

Track health



The Do's and Don'ts: Some advice on supplements

As we enter the track season many of you will be faced with some stiff competition and feel the pressure to win. This is a great thing and we want to help you face these challenges in a positive way. There are also negative things we want to help you to avoid and watch out for. As the pressures build and your body might not be doing what you expect or want it to do, we want you to have a little information about things that you should not turn to in order to get to your top form. The biggest thing to remember is that this is middle school track and field and that you are here to learn and improve...No Olympic tryouts just yet!

Supplements: what you should know... Firstly at the middle school age, supplements are something that we would strongly recommend against using. There is not enough research done on the long-term effects of supplements and the quality and consistency of these supplements cannot be guaranteed. 'Naturally occurring' by no means makes a product safe! In fact with recent studies and information there are less restrictions on their production because they tend not to be tested by the FDA, therefore cannot be trusted. Due to this, energy drinks and gels are probably not a great choice and thus not recommended by us. Also at this critical stage in development and growth it is simply not a safe time for the athletes to take on these unsafe and unknown practices.

What are supplements? Most commonly used supplements for track can be seen at this [site](#) created by CBC Sports. Supplements can range from anabolic steroids all the way to a simple multi-vitamin. Yes even vitamins are considered to be supplements. Supplements are usually used to help people get something into their body that they are unable to get through a regular diet. If this is the case for you, then I would recommend first going to your doctor to ensure that a trained diagnosis is made from a professional and after that contact a nutritionist. I have arranged for a local nutritionist to come in the first week of the track season to talk with us and everyone is welcome to come.

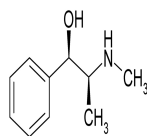


The only supplements that we would say are ok to use are vitamins C and E, but again, speak to a certified nutritionist about amounts. I would also suggest that the only reason you add a supplement to the diet of the athlete is to help their immune system, but again talk with a doctor first. A great place to start is the [International Health Center](#) in The Hague.

The most common supplements in use: As mentioned before vitamins are commonly used by a lot of people, but again make sure that you know why you are using them and make sure of the doses, don't just read the labels and assume that this is the right dosage for your intent!

Vitamin C & E: These are both antioxidants, which help to eliminate free radicals floating around the body. Also good for assisting the body cope with new surroundings or new situational stresses. Helps the immune system as well. Dangers to the athlete are fairly benign, but still consult a dietician to see if the athlete is meeting their daily-recommended nutrition needs.

Ephedrine: This supplement is often found in cold and allergy medicines and weight loss pills. It is meant for appetite suppression and works like an amphetamine or stimulant. This helps athletes be more alert and less prone to fatigue. Dangers for the athlete are it makes the heart beat faster and increases blood pressure which if the athlete has any unchecked heart problems could result in serious health problems or even death if certain pre-disposed health conditions exist.



Amphetamine/Methamphetamine: This supplement is sometimes used to treat people that suffer from attention-deficit hyperactive disorder. It is a stimulant and acts to bolster energy and confidence while also acting as an appetite suppressant. Dangers are similar to Ephedrine where the heart beats faster and blood pressure is increased possibly leading to medical problems.

Creatine: This supplement is used to help maintain high exertion levels repeatedly. Athletes generally use it if they are in sports that consist of powerful bursts done repeatedly. Usually found in a powder form and to be ingested by the athlete. Dangers of Creatine are not known yet, but studies have shown that there is really no conclusive evidence to its effectiveness. Furthermore, most athletes that use it don't know the proper doses to take and quality control is not there. If not yet over the age of 18, it is highly recommended not to use Creatine.

Protein: This supplement is used to promote rapid muscle recovery and growth for athletes. It can be found in powders, gels, shakes...etc. Dangers that come with the use of protein are inconclusive. Please check with an expert if you feel protein is a choice for you. Also remember that with a proper diet, protein requirements should be met in daily dietary needs.



Always keep in mind this is meant to be first and foremost a fun and relaxed experience for the athletes!!

Here are some helpful sites to take a look at to further your knowledge:

Coaches email: Coach Frew freweuan@msu.edu

CBC Sports: <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/indepth/drugs/glossary/dictionary.html>

Australian Institute of Sport: <http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition>

American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/nutrition.cfm>

International Health Center: <http://www.internationalhealth.nl/>