

Sports Supplements

<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/sports-supplements.html>

If you're a competitive athlete or a fitness buff, improving sports performance is probably one of your top priorities. Many people believe that taking sports supplements offers fast and effective results without having to do so much hard work. But do sports supplements really work and, even more important, are they safe?

What Are Sports Supplements?

- Sports supplements are products used to enhance athletic performance including vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbs, or botanicals (plants) and any concentration, extract, or combination of these. These products are generally available over the counter without a prescription.
- Sports supplements are considered a dietary supplement. Dietary supplements do not require U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval before they come on the market meaning that they can be sold containing variable amounts of ingredients or ingredients that may even not be listed on the label.
- The use of supplements has not been studied in teens. In adults it has been proven that most will not make you stronger and none will make you any faster or more skillful.
- Lots of sports organizations have developed policies on sports supplements. The National Football League (NFL), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have banned the use of steroids, ephedra, and androstenedione by their athletes, and competitors who use them face fines, ineligibility, and suspension from their sports.

What are Anabolic Steroids?

- Anabolic steroids are artificially produced hormones that are the same or similar to the male-type sex hormones in the body. Steroids are not considered a sports supplement.
- Anabolic steroids stimulate muscle tissue to grow and "bulk up" in response to training by mimicking the effect of naturally produced testosterone on the body. Anabolic steroids can remain in the body anywhere from a couple of days to about a year.
- Anabolic steroids may improve endurance, strength and muscle mass but do not improve skill, agility or athletic performance.
- Anabolic steroids cause many different types of problems. Some of the common side effects are acne, premature balding or hair loss, weight gain, mood swings, aggression, problems sleeping, high blood pressure, greater chance of injuring muscles and tendons, jaundice or yellowing of the skin, liver damage, stunted growth, increased risk of developing heart disease, blood clots, stroke, and some types of cancer.

Instead of turning to supplements to improve your performance, you should concentrate on good nutrition and proper training, including strength training and conditioning programs.

