

Swim England statement regarding nutritional supplement use in athletes under 18 years of age

Swim England work closely with British Swimming who in turn work with UKAD to ensure a consistent message is provided to the sport of swimming regarding the taking of medications and nutritional supplements.

Swim England do not promote the use of nutritional supplements by athletes under the age of 18. Throughout all ages and stages of the aquatic pathway, we promote a food-first approach to nutrition.

Athletes under 18 should be able to gain the nutrients they need for training and competition through a well-organised, balanced diet. Snacks to support fuelling for and recovery from training and competition can be gained from food sources rather than supplements. Nutritional supplements can carry a high risk of inadvertent doping through consumption of a banned substance contained within the supplement.

Often this banned substance is the result of product contamination during the manufacturing phase or incorrect labelling of product ingredients. In order to minimise the risk of inadvertent consumption of a banned substance, the supplement can be screened for the presence of banned substances by an audit and certification program such as Informed-Sport. This risk minimisation program registers products which have been screened and are deemed to be free of banned substances. However, there are no guarantees that any supplement product is free from prohibited substances.

Swim England does not support the use of nutritional supplements which are not registered with the Informed-Sport programme.

Athletes should be aware of the principle of Strict Liability within anti-doping rules which means that they are responsible for any prohibited substance (or its metabolites or markers) found in their bodily specimen regardless of its source of origin (i.e. whether a banned substance was consumed intentionally or not). Any competitive member of Swim England can be tested at any time as part of British Swimming's Anti-doping policy. Swim England members are subject to the jurisdiction of British Swimming for anti-doping purposes. Athletes under 18 are advised only to take supplements under the guidance of a qualified nutritionist (e.g. SENr) following a dietary analysis and thorough risk assessment of the supplement.

Links:

- UKAD Supplements:
<https://www.ukad.org.uk/education/athletes/performance/supplements/>
- Informed Sport: www.informed-sport.com
- Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register Supplement Use in sport Position Statement:
<http://www.senr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SENr-Supplement-Position-Statement-v-June-2017.pdf>