



POSITION STATEMENT ON THE USE OF SUPPLEMENTS

A supplement may be considered to be any substance consumed deliberately by a rower to enhance their daily diet, to elicit a performance enhancing or ergogenic effect, or to self-treat ill health or injury. There is however no legal definition for a supplement. Medication prescribed by a doctor, or the use of the recognised GB Rowing Team sports nutrition products (currently only produced by Science in Sport) are however acceptable. For GB Rowing Team funded rowers advice should be sought from the Team Nutritionist on the most appropriate products for each individual.

The position of the GB Rowing Team Medical and Science Committee is that members of the GB Rowing Team and national squads are strongly advised against the arbitrary use of supplements, which is in keeping with the policy of the British Olympic Association.

For these rowers supplements may be prescribed or advised by the GB Rowing Team Chief Medical Officer or Lead Nutritionist if a rower's diet is found to be deficient in a particular micronutrient or group of micronutrients. This will only occur after careful analysis of the rower's dietary intake, assessing deficiencies and inadequacies.

Junior rowers should not be using any supplement without medical advice – rowers under 18 yrs of age are advised to concentrate on learning and implementing good training, good diet and well-rehearsed recovery strategies. Supplements should be regarded as the final tweaking in performance rather than the foundation to performance.

In the sport in general, no vitamin or mineral supplements should be required if a rower is consuming adequate energy from a variety of foods to maintain bodyweight. For those rowers following a vegetarian diet or who need to make weight, individual dietary assessment is advised.

Little is known about nutrient-nutrient interactions on health and performance, but there is evidence that ill health can be provoked by a number of supplements and that there is a small but genuine risk of producing a positive doping test. In the UK, supplements are subject to the requirements of the Food Safety Act of 1990 and as such must not be injurious to health and must comply with food labelling regulations of 1996. There is no requirement in food law to take sport safety or doping issues into account.

Ingredients do not have to be listed on labels if they are present in a compound ingredient making up less than 25% of the final product. These ingredients may include WADA Prohibited Substances. Food laws within Europe and the rest of the world are not uniform, and as such supplements bought overseas, over the internet or mail order pose an even greater threat.

In the case of a member of the GB Rowing Team or national squad who feels they need to take a specific supplement, their individual case will be assessed by the GB Rowing Team Chief Medical Officer and Lead Nutritionist and appropriate advice given. In the case of rowers outside the squads, British Rowing's position is that supplements should only be taken after consulting a qualified medical practitioner with specialist knowledge of rowing who has taken advice from British Rowing's Chief Medical Officer on the WADA Prohibited Substances List and who is fully conversant with British Rowing's Anti-Doping Policy. If there is a need for a supplement to be used it should be under qualified medical supervision and not at random.

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