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Supplement Red Flags

Researching your supplements and recognizing red flags is one way to reduce your risk if you decide to use supplements. Before using any supplement, check to see if the product or manufacturer is on USADA's High Risk List. While these lists are not all inclusive, they do identify many supplements and manufacturers that are known to be risky for athletes and consumers.

You should also consider these red flags while evaluating and researching any supplement you might use.

High Risk Companies

- The manufacturer or company has received FDA warning letters or has been subject to other enforcement actions. Search for the company or product name on [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) or [FTC.gov](https://www.ftc.gov).
- Products sold exclusively on the internet may raise a red flag. While there are some legitimate dietary supplement companies that only have an online presence, some companies deliberately avoid regulatory agencies by opening and closing websites quickly or selling products online to the U.S. from other countries.

Risky Ingredients or Unusual Use Instructions

- Product lists unrecognizable ingredients that seem out of place or it lists ingredients by chemical names rather than common names.
- The supplement label or advertising includes substances on the WADA Prohibited List, or in a general category of the WADA Prohibited List, such as anabolic agents or stimulants.
- Any of the following phrases or characters on a body-building product label should be considered a red flag because they might indicate the presence of steroids: andro, -ol, -diol, -dione, -stene or -stane, epi, epithio, gonado, or any ingredient that is listed as a chemical formula.
- Any product that is taken or applied to the body in a way other than simply eating it or swallowing it, such as skin patches, creams, injections, and drops. Also be wary of extra steps before swallowing, including placing the product under the tongue or swishing it around in your mouth
- Ingredients have no clear, well-documented nutritional value. If you've never heard of an ingredient, then you should stop and do research first.



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