

The dietary supplement industry is vast and ever changing. This fast-paced movement leads to safety issues that are significant to both athletes and non-athletes. There is a lack of government oversight through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that leads to three main dangers within the industry. Adulteration, Cross Contamination, and Third-Party sellers make it exceedingly difficult for athletes to navigate the world of supplements and to make informed decisions based on what they are consuming. There is no way for an athlete to guarantee what a label says is true, so athletes consume supplements at their own risk.

Based on findings from the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), 75% of athletes consume dietary supplements. It is in an athlete's best interest to lessen the risk of dietary supplements in any way they can. This can simply be done in a couple of ways. First, they can only source products from the company itself. Cutting out the middleman of a supplement store or third-party vendor reduces the risk of sourcing counterfeit products. Next, getting products from companies that have been third party certified minimizes risks associated with supplements through batch testing and analysis of manufacturing processes. Lastly, NCAA athletes can use AXIS, a free tool to analyze the risk of ingredients and marketing associated with products.

Drug Free Sport AXIS can be accessed by NCAA athletes, coaches, and athletic trainers by going to axis.drugfreesport.com and creating a free account. From here users can create an inquiry into a dietary supplement, which will be assigned a risk level on a scale of one to three. Athletes are given information needed to make informed decisions based on ingredients and marketing associated with the product. From here it is up to the athlete to decide whether the risks associated with usage of dietary supplements is worth it.

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