



Drugs in Sport: An Awareness Guide

What performance-enhancing drugs are, and why they are not worth it

Performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) promise shortcuts to strength, size or endurance. The reality is serious, sometimes irreversible harm, and a ban from sport. This guide is for awareness, for athletes and the coaches who support them. It is educational only.

The rules: WADA and clean sport

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) sets the global anti-doping rules. Doping, using a banned substance or method to boost performance, risks your health, your reputation and your eligibility to compete. When in doubt, check the current Prohibited List.

The main categories

Substance	Claimed effect	The reality
Anabolic steroids	Muscle and strength	Heart attacks, strokes, liver and kidney damage, hormonal and mood problems, some irreversible
Growth hormone (HGH)	More muscle, less fat	Diabetes, heart disease, joint pain, swelling, raised cancer risk
Blood doping / EPO	More oxygen, endurance	Thickened blood, clots, stroke and heart risk
Stimulants	Alertness, less fatigue	Addiction, high blood pressure, anxiety, masked injury, sometimes fatal strain
Beta-blockers	Steadier hands, calm	Banned in target sports. Dizziness, low mood and other effects

CBD: a word of caution

Pure CBD is not currently banned, but other cannabinoids including THC are. CBD is hard to extract cleanly, so many products contain traces of THC. If that shows up in a test, the product will not excuse you. Treat CBD products with caution.

Even legal supplements carry risk. Studies have found banned substances in 12 to 58% of supplements tested, and in around three quarters of some "pre-workout" and "fat-burner" products in the UK. If you compete, use only batch-tested products such as those certified by Informed Sport.

The bottom line

No performance gain is worth lasting harm to your health, or a doping ban. Food, training, sleep and recovery are the foundations, and none of them are banned. If you coach athletes, point them to qualified support and UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) resources.

Where to learn more: the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) and its Clean Sport Hub, Informed Sport, and the NHS. For any health concern, please speak to your GP.

This leaflet is general awareness and education only. It is not medical or legal advice, and it does not encourage or endorse the use of any substance. For health concerns, speak to your GP, and for anti-doping questions, contact UK Anti-Doping.

Ready to take the next step? Book a free call or start your food diary analysis at performancenutritionlondon.co.uk