



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SUPPLEMENTS

Surveys across the board show that about 50% of athletes report taking supplements, though what is defined as a supplement is not clear. What is clear is that although many top athletes take supplements, supplementation is not a prerequisite for being the best in your chosen activity, or even for reaching your personal best, since the other 50% of athletes don't use them!! Never the less, some supplements (such as vitamins and minerals) can play a valuable role in a winning diet.

Scientific studies have failed to find any benefits associated with the majority of supplements used in health food stores, muscle building magazines and gyms. However some supplements might be useful in your sports nutrition plan. Some supplements are very sport specific or training/competition specific, as opposed to more general supplements that can be taken daily. Specialist advice is required.

There are a number of products which contain everyday nutrients, but in a more practical form than everyday foods. These include sports drinks, liquid meal supplements, sports bars, high carbohydrate gels or powders. Of course, these are more expensive than everyday foods, so it is important to justify cost against convenience.

A sports dietitian can help you to identify situations in which these supplements can help you to meet unusual or challenging nutritional goals. Most importantly, a dietitian can advise you of the right supplement to use at the right time.