

A Fact Sheet for Student-Athletes

Drug-Testing

WHAT ARE MEDICAL EXCEPTIONS?

The NCAA recognizes that some banned substances are used for legitimate medical purposes. The NCAA allows exceptions to be made for those student-athletes with a documented medical history demonstrating the need for treatment with certain banned substances.

WHEN TO REQUEST AN EXCEPTION FOR THE USE OF NCAA BANNED SUBSTANCES?

Before a student-athlete participates (practice or competition):

Medical exceptions pre-approvals (MEPAs) are required for the following drug classes:

- Anabolic agents.
- Hormone and metabolic modulators.
- Peptide hormones, growth factors, related substances and mimetics.

Following a positive NCAA drug test:

Medical exceptions (MEs) are required for the following drug classes:

- Beta blockers or beta-2 agonists.
- Diuretics/masking agents.
- Narcotics.
- Stimulants.

WHAT IS THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION?

The student-athlete's school should collect and maintain documentation that supports the use of the banned medication in the student-athlete's medical record on campus.

- The documentation can be a letter or copies of medical notes from the prescribing physician that documents how the diagnosis was reached, and that the student-athlete has a medical history demonstrating the need for treatment with the banned medication.
- The letter should contain information as to the diagnosis (including appropriate verification of the diagnosis), medical history and dosage information. [See the FAQ about NCAA banned substances and medical exceptions for additional information.](#)

For more information and resources, visit ncaa.org/drugtesting.

*Student-athletes are responsible
for everything they ingest.*

CAN I APPEAL A POSITIVE NCAA DRUG TEST?

The NCAA drug-testing program allows a school to appeal a positive drug test on behalf of a student-athlete who has tested positive for an NCAA banned substance or who has violated the NCAA drug-testing protocol.

- Schools must submit the required appeal documentation to Drug Free Sport International ([see Checklist](#)).
- All appeals will start with a written review by at least three members from the CSMAS Drug-Test Appeal Subcommittee.
- Once a decision is rendered, NCAA staff will notify the director of athletics or their designee of the final outcome.
- If the appeal is granted, no further action regarding eligibility needs to be taken.
- If the appeal is not granted, the student-athlete is required to comply with all applicable provisions of NCAA legislation, including testing negative for all banned drug classes on an NCAA exit test.



2025-26 NCAA BANNED DRUG CLASSES

The NCAA bans the following classes of drugs:

1. Stimulants.
2. Anabolic agents.
3. Beta blockers (banned for golf and rifle).
4. Diuretics and other masking agents.
5. Narcotics.
6. Peptide hormones, growth factors, related substances and mimetics.
7. Hormone and metabolic modulators.
8. Beta-2 agonists.

Substances and Methods Subject to Restrictions:

1. Blood and gene doping.
2. Local anesthetics (under some conditions).
3. Manipulation of urine samples.
4. Tampering of urine samples.
5. Beta-2 agonists permitted only by prescription and inhalation.

There is no complete list of banned substances. Any substance that is chemically related to the class, even if it is not listed as an example, is also banned. See examples at ncaa.org/drugtesting.

SUPPLEMENTS

Before consuming any nutritional/dietary supplement product, first review the product with your athletics department staff.

- There are no NCAA-approved nutritional/dietary supplements.
- Many nutritional/dietary supplements are contaminated with banned substances not listed on the label.
- Nutritional/dietary supplements, including vitamins and minerals, are not well-regulated and may cause a positive drug test.
- Student-athletes have tested positive and lost their eligibility using nutritional/dietary supplements.
- Complete elimination of risk is impossible, even with third-party tested and low-level risk products.
- All nutritional/dietary supplements are taken at the student-athlete's own risk.

It is your responsibility to check with the appropriate athletics staff before using any substance.

Check a supplement product label at:



816-474-7321

axis.drugfreesport.com

Access code: ncaa1, ncaa2 or ncaa3

Report all use of supplements and medications to the appropriate athletics staff.



COMMONLY ABUSED SUBSTANCES AND THEIR IMPACT ON ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE AND ELIGIBILITY

ALCOHOL: Alcohol is a nervous system depressant. At high dosages, effects include mood swings, impaired judgment and inability to control motor functions. Alcohol can impair an athlete's performance through dehydration, depleting vital nutrients and interfering with restful sleep and recovery.

TOBACCO: Tobacco contains nicotine, a stimulant, and a multitude of damaging chemicals. Smoking tobacco damages lung tissue and reduces lung capacity. Spit tobacco use contributes to soft-tissue inflammation in the mouth and increases the risk of oral cancer. Tobacco use in all forms is prohibited during practice and competition by student-athletes and game personnel (Divisions II and III only), and may result in ejection from the game.

CANNABINOIDS: Cannabinoids include cannabis and cannabidiol (CBD). Cannabis use is linked to anxiety, panic reactions, respiratory damage, short-term memory impairment and a decreased focus on goals and personal achievement. Use of contemporary cannabinoids may pose additional health risks associated with problematic use.



Need help for substance abuse?
Visit samhsa.gov/find-help/treatment.

BANNED

ANABOLIC STEROIDS: Anabolic steroids are synthetic versions of the male hormone testosterone. Anabolic steroid use changes the body's hormonal balance, exaggerating male sex characteristics, and can contribute to increased acne, mood swings, secondary sex characteristic changes and violent behavior. Long-term heavy use has been implicated in organ damage. All anabolic steroids are **banned** by the NCAA.

BANNED

COCAINE: Cocaine is a stimulant that can contribute to agitation, elevated heart rate and increased blood pressure; toxic levels can result in respiratory failure and heart attack. Cocaine is an illegal substance and is **banned** by the NCAA.

BANNED

NARCOTICS: Narcotics (pain killers) block pain and cause sleepiness, and at higher doses affect breathing, heart rate and blood pressure. Narcotics are controlled substances **banned** by the NCAA and should be obtained only from qualified medical personnel through a prescription.

BANNED

STIMULANTS: This group of drugs includes a wide variety of chemicals, ranging from caffeine and ephedrine to Ritalin and Adderall (amphetamine). Stimulant misuse can cause anxiety, panic, paranoia and delusions. Stimulant use during exercise can contribute to increased body temperature and dehydration. Stimulants are **banned** by the NCAA – see [Medical Exceptions](#) for prescribed drugs.

