



Dear Healthcare Provider,

This letter highlights the responsibilities inherent when treating an athlete subject to anti-doping rules per the [World Anti-Doping Code](#). As a healthcare provider, your role is instrumental in helping athletes maintain their reputation and navigate their sport responsibilities, including anti-doping. Under the Code, athlete support persons are also subject to rules, which is why it remains important that you know how best to protect both yourself and the athletes under your care.

WADA identifies treatments as prohibited if they meet two of three criteria: potentially performance enhancing, violating the spirit of sport, or representing a potential health risk. The [World Anti-Doping Agency \(WADA\) Prohibited List](#) identifies the different classes of prohibited medications and methods. In cases where various treatment options are feasible, permitted treatments must be considered first despite diverging from standard prescribing practices. Permitted medications and treatments do not require medical justification or Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). Ultimately, athletes are responsible and strictly liable for anything that enters their body, regardless of how it got there.

With the exception of urgent/emergent situations where delaying treatment puts the athlete's life, health, or safety at risk, we encourage you to check the [Global Drug Reference Online \(Global DRO\)](#) resource before prescribing treatment. Global DRO provides information on the prohibited status (in sport) of treatments, as a prescription from a licensed medical provider by itself is not sufficient justification for an athlete to use a prohibited medication in the context of sport. If an athlete has an unequivocal diagnosis and the only option is a prohibited medication or treatment, with assistance from you, they must meet the following criteria to grant a TUE:

- Confirmed diagnosis of a medical condition requiring treatment with a prohibited medication or method.
- Treatment would not enhance performance beyond a return to a normal, baseline state of health.
- Permitted treatments don't exist **OR** were trialed without success **OR** are contraindicated due to potential negative side effects or comorbidities.

TUE decisions are not a judgment on whether it's clinically reasonable or within the standard of care to treat the athlete with a prohibited medication or method. Instead, it's an evaluation of whether the treatment meets WADA criteria for use by an athlete in the context of competitive sport. Athletes without an approved TUE for prohibited treatments are at risk of an anti-doping rule violation. If you have additional questions about TUEs or require clarification on prohibited treatments, please reach out to the USADA TUE & Drug Reference Team using the contact information below.

Unlike FDA-approved drugs, due to post-market regulation, supplements may contain prohibited substances and put athletes at risk for an anti-doping rule violation or other adverse health impact. No dietary supplement can be guaranteed to be 100 percent risk-free, even if recommended by medical providers. If athletes choose to use supplements despite the risks, USADA recommends that athletes use only dietary supplements that have been certified by a third-party program that tests for substances prohibited in sport. USADA currently recognizes NSF Certified for Sport® as the program best suited for athletes to reduce risk from supplements. More information on dietary supplement risks and ways to reduce the risk of a positive test from supplements may be found within USADA's educational resource, Supplement Connect.

For more information about anti-doping rules, complete our free eLearning course, developed in collaboration with Stanford University. The online [USADA HealthPro Advantage](#) course can be taken for CME & CEU credits and has detailed information on the unique aspects of treating athletes! Contact us for questions or additional support:

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