**Sport Supplementation**

Sports supplements are products used to enhance athletic performance that may include vitamins, minerals, amino acids, herbs or any concentration, extract, or combination of these. These products are generally available without any prescription.

Sports supplements haven't been tested on teens and kids. But studies on adults show that the claims of many supplements are weak at best. Most won't make you any stronger, and none will make you any faster or more skillful. Many factors go into your abilities as an athlete — including your diet, how much sleep you get, genetics and heredity, and your training program. But the fact is that using sports supplements may put you at risk for serious health conditions. So instead of turning to supplements to improve your performance, concentrate on nutrition and follow a weight-training and aerobic-conditioning program.

Ads for sports supplements often use persuasive before and after pictures that make it look easy to get a muscular, toned body. But the goal of supplement advertisers is to make money by selling more supplements and many claims may be misleading. Teens and kids may seem like an easy sell on supplements because they may feel dissatisfied or uncomfortable with their still-developing bodies, and many supplement companies try to convince teens that supplements are an easy solution. Don't waste your money on expensive and dangerous supplements. Instead you could:

- **Make downtime a priority:** Study shows that teenagers need at least 8 hours of sleep
- **Learn to relax:** Your school, work, and sports schedules may have you sprinting from one activity to the next, but taking a few minutes to relax can be helpful.
- **Choose good eats:** Fried, fatty, or sugary foods will interfere with your performance. Instead, focus on eating foods such as lean meats, whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and low-fat dairy products.
- **Train harder and smarter:** If you get out of breath easily during your basketball game and you want to increase your endurance, work on improving your cardiovascular conditioning.
- **Avoid harmful substances:** Smoking will get rid of your lung capacity and your ability to breathe, alcohol can make you sluggish and tired, and can impair your hand-eye coordination and reduce your alertness.