

True Sport™ Parent Handbook



TrueSport™

A guidebook to developing young athletes
and the role parents play





CONTENTS

◆	Introduction to Parents	Page 1
◆	Being a True Sport	Page 5
◆	Shortcuts and Cheating	Page 12
◆	Energy Drinks, Supplements, and Nutrition	Page 18
◆	True Sport™ Parent Action Plan	Page 28

Introduction to PARENTS

As a parent, you go to great lengths to both safeguard your children and to try to give them the best opportunities. You enroll them in sports activities for the opportunities to make friends and learn new skills. You buy them the best equipment, make sure they remember to bring it to practice, and help them put it on correctly. You watch practices and games so you can be right there for the joyous moments as well as the not so joyous ones, and even in case of injury.

While the thrill of the performance is exciting and winning results are alluring, you know that the best reward is seeing the improved confidence, friendships, and overall growth your young athletes gain through meaningful sport experiences. The True Sport™ Parent Handbook is designed to help you ensure a safe, healthy, and meaningful sport experience for your children that will support the competitive spirit, as well as maximize their potential both on and off the field.





WHAT IS TRUE SPORT™?

True Sport™, powered by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, is designed to positively impact and preserve the future of sport in America. True Sport™ fuels the potential that lies within our young athletes; it's about what can happen if we redefine the goal, if we look beyond the finish line and celebrate progress in addition to results. Allowing our youth to fail, to learn, to grow, and to have fun in addition to competing to win, will lead to a valuable journey and allow them to be truly victorious.

- ◆ True Sport™ is the recognition that all of life's potential can be realized through honest participation - whether in competitive sport, academic endeavors, business relationships, or community engagement.
- ◆ True Sport™ brings people of all ages together to support the values of pure sport enjoyment and competition.
- ◆ True Sport™ isn't only about the final result - it is entrenched in the rewarding quest for that result.

True Sport™ empowers everyone to do their part to make sure sport is delivering positive experiences for our future generations. It is based on a platform focused on competing strong, playing fair, and achieving more. Constantly looking into the future, True Sport™ is grounded in these principles:

- ◆ **Grow to Lead** - Challenge yourself, strive for excellence and lead by example.
- ◆ **Fair Play or No Way** - The only way to play is with respect for others and for the game.
- ◆ **Be Courageous** - Stand up for what's right both in sport and in life. Stick to your principles; help make sport better.
- ◆ **Practice Humility** - Take pride in how you behave. Win with grace and lose with dignity.
- ◆ **See Further Than Today** - Discover through sport that the future is full of possibility.
- ◆ **Believe in Better** - Continually improve in sport and in life through hard work and dedication.
- ◆ **Keep it Real** - Focus on having fun and don't be afraid to fail. Healthy competition can help you discover what you are capable of accomplishing.
- ◆ **Achieve More** - Always play to win the game, but know that competing fairly and celebrating progress in addition to results makes you truly victorious.



AS A PARENT, WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Performing well in a given sport is a part of being an athlete. It's a given. It's what is at the heart of competition, and the reward that can come with seeking out the limits of personal achievement. And isn't it also about possibility? It's about the amazement of recognizing your potential and striving to attain it.

The sport journey can be tremendously rewarding, not to mention the tangible benefits of awards, medals, prize money, and recognition. However, along with the passion and thrill of reaching potential, the glory of realizing sport success can come with inevitable challenges - pressure, insecurity, temptation, and even fear. This can be a very real aspect of the sports experience, and a very authentic part of the journey. It is how athletes navigate these challenges that define what kind of athlete they will be.



Every day, we witness issues in sport in America, for example:

- ◆ Coaches having inappropriate relationships with players
- ◆ Parents fighting and berating players at youth sporting events
- ◆ Fans and parents going overboard and assaulting coaches, players, officials, or even each other
- ◆ Athletes driving drunk
- ◆ Corrupt officials fixing competitions
- ◆ Athletes breaking records with the help of performance-enhancing substances

These behaviors trickle down to the youth level with concerns like early specialization, overtraining, overuse injuries, competitive and scholarship pressure, overzealous parents, intolerant and/or under-qualified coaches, and even performance-enhancing tactics at earlier ages. The proliferation and combination of these issues lead to the win-at-all costs culture we sometimes experience in sport today, and can create a singular focus on winning, without consideration of what it actually means to achieve.



According to a research report released by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency in 2011, *What Sport Means in America: A Study of Sport's Role in Society*¹, Americans care about sport and believe performance-enhancing drugs are the number one issue facing sport today. This is emblematic of a larger social issue. Our country is experiencing the consequences of a culture that often prioritizes winning and taking shortcuts, in both sport and commerce, including role models who lack integrity and influential leaders who think rules don't apply to them and who are focused only on the scoreboard and the associated extrinsic rewards as the end game. As a result of our "anything it takes to win" culture, our next generations will benefit from ideals and behaviors that shift this attitude toward a re-defined notion of winning. Focusing on the journey and celebrating progress in addition to results actually leads to greater "scoreboard wins."

At the end of the day, we all want confident and curious children who express a willingness to experiment and make mistakes. With so much pressure placed on our children, some would rather cheat to get to the top than try their hardest and potentially fail.

At least 50 million young people are involved in sport in this country, so we have at least 50 million reasons to support and protect the inherently positive life lessons learned through true sport. The vast majority will not go on to elite-level, collegiate, or professional careers, and most will benefit from sport experiences in other important life endeavors. This is where True Sport™ comes to life.



Being a True Sport





BEING A PART OF THE TEAM: THE POSITIVE PARENT ROLE

Signing your son or daughter up for a team means that he or she will become a teammate. As a parent, you will likely have many conversations with your young athlete about sharing, supporting, and working through conflict as he navigates this important role.

Have you thought about the new role that you'll also take on once you've added your child's name to the roster? What exactly does it mean to be a **True Sport™ Parent**? The athlete's job is clear. He is there to work hard, have fun, learn, and grow. The coach's job is also straightforward. She is the leader, organizer, and teacher. It is the coach's role to develop the athletes and design a safe and effective plan for the season and each competition. So where exactly does that leave you? Chauffeur? Fan? Financier? Support network? How can the **True Sport™ Parent** best support both the coach and athlete?

A True Sport™ Parent:

- ◆ Supports his/her athlete unconditionally
- ◆ Helps the coach or officials when asked
- ◆ Leaves the coaching to the coach
- ◆ Focuses efforts on cheering for the things all players do well and doesn't look for things to criticize
- ◆ Lets the experience be the athlete's
- ◆ Stays in control of emotions



A True Sport™ Parent does not:

- ◆ Overemphasize winning, championships, or a career in sports
- ◆ Rush his/her athlete through the early fun stages into more serious training before he is ready
- ◆ Use the car ride home to do an in-depth game analysis
- ◆ Undermine or override the coach's decisions
- ◆ Step into practice without being asked
- ◆ Drink alcohol before or during his/her child's athletic events²



Being a **True Sport™ Parent** requires patience, self-control, and a clear focus on the best interest of the young player. Before enrolling your child in a sport program, ask yourself if you are ready to take a step back and embrace your role as a **True Sport™ Parent**. Rosen suggests you ask yourself the following questions as honestly as you can:

- ◆ Do you and your family have the time necessary to support the commitment the athlete is making to the team?
- ◆ Are you ready to share your child and his sport experience with others?
- ◆ Are you willing to accept the coach's authority as the team leader?
- ◆ Can you handle the frustration and disappointment your child will experience?
- ◆ Is my child playing for a True Sport™ Coach?³

What makes a True Sport Coach?

As a **True Sport™ Parent**, it is up to you to ensure your child is playing for a True Sport™ Coach or team – someone that understands your athlete is still growing and developing and knows she has a unique opportunity to help young athletes develop and compete as people. As a parent, it is important that you know what a developmental athlete needs and what makes a quality coach.

A developmental athlete:

1. Is still growing and changing with regard to mental, physical, emotional, psychological and social skills
2. Has unique needs to help develop mental, physical, emotional, psychological and social skills
3. Can appear fully developed in one area but be very underdeveloped in other areas



In the process of selecting a **quality** coach, there are many questions you should ask yourself.

- ◆ Does the league require background checks?
- ◆ What type of sport training is required by the league or club?
- ◆ What first aid training is required by the league or club?
- ◆ What is the coach's philosophy regarding youth development through sport?
- ◆ What are the coach's goals for the team and how do they compare to my child's and mine?





If you don't know the answers to these questions, don't be afraid to ask. It will help everyone get on the same page.

1. Does the coach know how to coach a developmental athlete? Does she:
 - ◆ Make a commitment to emphasize process over outcome (focus on the path, not the goal)?
 - ◆ Consider the different developmental levels of each individual athlete?
 - ◆ Research the developmental pathways for developing athletes in your sport?
 - ◆ Restructure practice to emphasize skill development?
 - ◆ Identify complementary activities to the sport that help develop well-rounded athletes?
 - ◆ Understand that each athlete will have individual needs?

2. Does she know how to teach adolescents?
 - ◆ Although they go by different names and strive for different objectives, coaches and teachers are working towards the same thing. They strive to create an environment to build and develop the skills of the individuals they work with. Beyond simply holding a piece of chalk or blowing a whistle, being a really effective teacher or coach takes practice.

3. Does she coach with character?
 - ◆ Does she always coach to win, but with a parallel purpose to encourage player development with the True Sport™ Principles (on page 2) in mind? A coach is going to be one of the most influential people in your child's life. Leading by example and coaching with character is important in helping build a transition between the character traits your child will learn on the field to being a good citizen in his community.
 - ◆ Does she coach by focusing on skill mastery rather than results? The pursuit of excellence should be the driving force, with victory as a by-product. A True Sport™ Coach focuses attention and direct praise towards effort rather than outcome.





- ◆ Does she set standards and goals, not just for the team, but for each athlete? Does she hold each athlete accountable? Leading with integrity helps develop the best people both on and off the field.
 - ◆ Does she take responsibility for teaching players the true essence of being a winner? The satisfaction of winning is something that should be earned with respect through fair competition.
 - ◆ Does she embrace achieving positive outcomes through failure and mistakes? A True Sport™ Coach embraces her team's failures and mistakes as part of the path to victory. A coach who views mistakes as learning opportunities will cultivate an environment where athletes don't fear mistakes. Focus should be on the opportunities for learning, while not forgetting the importance of the fundamentals.
4. Does she invest in personal development and is she knowledgeable in the important areas of coaching?
- ◆ Getting to the top is not a race, but a journey. Does the coach participate in deliberate practice of being a student of coaching?
 - ◆ Being a coach is not always about being right and it isn't about knowing everything. However, it is about expanding the knowledge of training to help improve your child's performance.

5. Does she understand her influence as a coach?

- ◆ Coaches are considered to be the number one most positive influence in an athlete's life, and understanding that influence is paramount to being a successful coach.¹ This influence includes:
 - Building resiliency and mental toughness
 - Meeting the athletes' different motivation levels
 - Integrating fun into sport
 - Developing the 'thinking athlete'
 - Encouraging self-awareness
 - Helping develop coping skills
 - Encouraging preparation/commitment
 - Providing support



Knowing the answers to these important questions will help you make an informed decision regarding your child's participation in sport.

WORKING WITH YOUR CHILD'S COACH

While you may know a lot about sport and may have even coached before, this is your child's experience and you have entrusted him to the team and coach. Unless there are concerns for your child's physical and/or emotional safety or well-being, as a **True Sport™ Parent** the best thing you can do is:

- ◆ Work with and support the coach in their efforts
- ◆ Provide unconditional support to your athlete

Many parents look to youth sport as a means to enrich their child's experiences and to help teach positive life lessons, such as discipline and the value of hard work. While just playing sport alone will not guarantee these valuable gains, participating in a well-designed program with adult leaders who know how to work with athletes at a developmentally appropriate level is key to achieving positive outcomes.



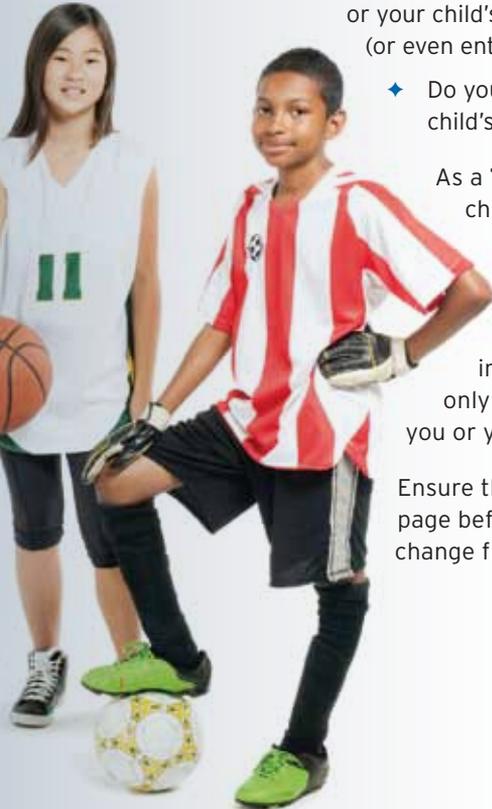
Is it okay to make winning a priority?

Absolutely! It is important to stress the importance of playing your heart out and striving to win. That is an integral part of sports. In fact, if an athlete is not playing to win, he may not be respecting the game. However, making winning the only priority is where you as a **True Sport™ Parent** can get into trouble. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ Do you know if your child truly enjoys the sport(s) he plays?
- ◆ At your child's athletic events, have you ever noticed a coach or other parents behaving inappropriately?
- ◆ Have you ever been tempted to argue with a fellow parent or sporting official during a youth sports event?
- ◆ Do you have trouble keeping quiet during your child's competition?
- ◆ Do you get more upset about a loss than your child does?
- ◆ Does your child become overly upset when a game or play doesn't go his way?
- ◆ Following a practice or a game/competition, do you find your discussions, or your child's coach's discussions focusing primarily (or even entirely) on the outcome?
 - ◆ Do you know the sports philosophy of your child's coach?

As a **True Sport™ Parent**, discuss with your child his priorities when competing. Maybe his number one priority is to have fun or to simply play with his friends. Maybe it is to master certain skills or to place first in the upcoming competition. The important thing is not to make winning the only priority. If it is the only priority, what will you or your child be willing to do to get there?

Ensure that you and your child are on the same page before each season of each sport. Goals may change from season to season or sport to sport.





Shortcuts and Cheating

Young athletes face many challenges - the internal pressure to win, living up to unreasonable external expectations, unhealthy body image, coming back from injury, staying injury-free, or trying to land an important scholarship - and the temptations to find alternatives or succumb to taking shortcuts, or even cheating, can become a reality. The list of challenges goes on and on, and it's easy to forget about or misunderstand the challenges student-athletes face.

The society in which we live does not help. We place a tremendous amount of pressure on athletes to succeed. Winning and peak-performing athletes sell tickets and sponsorships, which translate into generating revenues and paying salaries. Young athletes feel pressure, and often put pressure on themselves, to impress friends and family and get college scholarships. Athletes often feel pressured to ensure their performance is top notch and are willing to risk their health, career, and good name for fame and fortune. There is so much pressure to succeed and to be the best, that this "win-at-all-costs" attitude can create a culture of youth that lack the desire to work hard and are too comfortable taking shortcuts. The bottom line is, there are no shortcuts. Athletes need support and advice to guide them in a positive and healthy direction.



Be a good sport

Sports can teach honor, physical skills, self-esteem, humility, teamwork, and healthy lifestyles. However, in certain circumstances they can also teach cheating, create inflated egos, give a sense of entitlement, and reinforce distorted body images and poor health choices. A strong ethical foundation can be the difference between the amazing benefits and the horrible damage sport can inflict.

According to a research report released by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency in 2011, *What Sport Means in America: A Study of Sport's Role in Society*¹, more than 80% of adults believe that bending the rules in sport is cheating and that it should not be tolerated for any reason. Most children understand that breaking the rules in sport is unfair and wrong and that striving to win does not justify cheating.

If we can teach our children to win with grace and lose with dignity after a fair and well-fought match, respect themselves and the athletes on the field because of their efforts, and look forward to the next contest, they won't feel pressured to cheat or bend the rules. They'll know you'll be proud of them no matter what the outcome is. And whether they'll admit it or not, your children want to make you proud at every age.





How important is it for your child to win every time?

It's okay to make winning a priority, just as long as it's not the only priority. If winning is everything to you and your child, what are you willing to do to win? How far are you willing to go? Are these the types of lessons we want the next generation to learn? It's important as parents to remind ourselves why we placed our child in sport. Usually, we want our child to have some FUN and reap the benefits of engaging in an activity that provides returns on so many levels, regardless of the outcome. Outcomes are not always more important than the experiences.

Find ways to reward what you value, rather than just the outcome of a competition. Point out acts of sportsmanship, exceptional skill mastery, or use examples of behavior you observed to reinforce positive character traits. This will help ease the pressure on your child and allow her to benefit from the values of True Sport™.



Is it ever okay to take shortcuts?

If we allow our children to take shortcuts in any part of their lives, they can get comfortable bending the rules in other areas of their life. Ethics are not bound by the line of a playing field or the walls of a classroom. It's essential that our children know how to make the best choices when put in difficult situations and you have a tremendous opportunity as the parent to help lay a strong ethical foundation. The True Sport™ Principles (on page 2) are a great place to start.

Help your athlete find her unlimited potential through hard work, respect, and integrity. Healthy, fair, safe, and authentic competition leads to a valuable journey, and to more winning both in life and sport.

WHAT IS DOPING?

It is in the newspapers. It is on TV. It is in blog and forum commentary. Doping in sport has become a popular topic. But what exactly is doping, and why do we need to discuss it outside of the media? Why should you as a **True Sport™ Parent** care?

The simple definition of doping is using a substance or technique for the purpose of enhancing athletic performance. While there are many types of illegal substances and methods, most commonly you may hear of anabolic steroids or human growth hormone (hGH).

The use of performance-enhancing substances by adolescents is not only illegal, but is a growing problem in our country. With the click of a button on your computer, your child can be exposed to thousands of dealers on the Internet waiting for an impressionable young person. Not only can the health consequences be devastating, the use of these substances is cheating and often times leads to lying and deception.



Many parents believe that their child would never use performance-enhancing substances, and this may be the case. However, according to the *Monitoring the Future* study⁴, about 1 in every 25 twelfth-grade males used steroids and/or andro in 2010, and 26% of 12th graders claim it is fairly easy or very easy to get steroids.

There is also a growing trend of young athletes using stimulants and sharing prescription medications for performance purposes. Maybe even more pressing is the growing use of “sport performance” supplements that can contain potent and/or illegal ingredients. As a parent, how would you feel if you found out that your child had been using a performance-enhancing substance?

A lack of ethics plays an important part in the world of doping in sport, and without a clear ethical path for your child, a sports season can easily take a wrong turn. Every decision has a consequence (good or bad), and every consequence affects more than just the person who made the decision. Accountability is critical, and helping your child understand how her decisions both on and off the field affect not only herself but everyone around her is crucial.

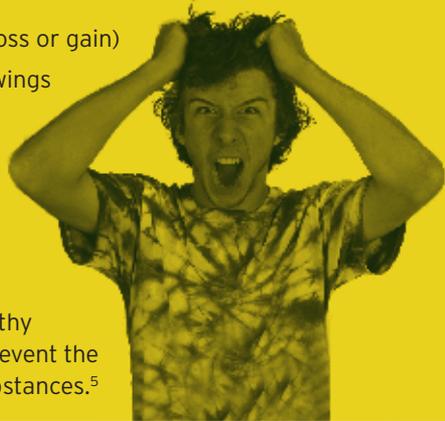


What are the signs of performance-enhancing substance abuse that I should look for as a parent?

There are many different legal and illegal drugs and supplements that athletes may take in an effort to enhance performance. The exact signs and symptoms that an athlete exhibits will be different based on the substance and the individual. Some of the general warning signs that may indicate the need for caution and discussion include:

- ◆ An overemphasis on winning
- ◆ A high level of perfectionism with a low self-tolerance for anything perceived to be 'not good enough'
- ◆ High levels of stress when workouts don't go well
- ◆ Cardiac arrhythmia
- ◆ Worsening acne
- ◆ Rapid physical changes (weight loss or gain)
- ◆ Drastic and unexplained mood swings
- ◆ High blood pressure
- ◆ Secretive behavior
- ◆ Excessive exercise
- ◆ An unexpected change in peer groups

Encouraging your child to adopt healthy eating and exercise habits can help prevent the usage of performance-enhancing substances.⁵



How do I talk to my child about performance-enhancing substances and their side effects?

There are many pressures that may drive a young person to try or abuse steroids or other performance-enhancing substances. Find those teachable moments during your family's daily rituals to discuss important topics such as the use of performance-enhancing substances and their side effects. It's important to have an open dialogue with your child concerning topics like steroid usage. If she's uncomfortable talking to you, she's likely to seek advice elsewhere and those sources could be unreliable.

Below are some tips for navigating the discussion of performance-enhancing substance use with your child.

1. Open up the performance-enhancing drug dialogue - don't wait for your child to come to you. Ask her what she thinks about steroid or other substance usage in a nonjudgmental, open-minded way so you can receive an honest response.

2. Use real world events. The use of performance-enhancing substances by well-known athletes has become a popular topic. When you see or hear about instances such as these, use that as an opportunity to discuss the issue with your child, ensuring she understands the health risks, possible legal trouble, and the ethics involved in cheating.
3. Discuss the health risks associated with the use and abuse of steroids as well as other performance-enhancing substances.
4. Share your views. You may be surprised that many young people believe their parents would be accepting of their use of such substances. You are probably asking yourself, why? Well, it seems as though as parents, the messages that we are practicing and preaching are not in sync. Your child needs to be aware of why you think performance-enhancing substance use is wrong and what your family values.⁵



How do I intervene if I think my child is abusing performance-enhancing substances?

If you think or know that your child is using performance-enhancing substances, it is important to take action right away. Intervention can be as simple as a conversation, directly approaching your child about your concerns. As a parent, you must make it clear that you no longer want your child using the substance. While it may be an uncomfortable conversation for both of you, even if you think she is just experimenting, casual drug use can lead to abuse, legal trouble, and serious health issues.

You can intervene by:

1. Setting tighter limits with clear consequences
2. Having productive conversations, sharing your concerns and actively listening to your child
3. Closely monitoring your child's behaviors and activities
4. Getting outside help and support if necessary⁶



Energy Drinks, Supplements, and Nutrition

WHAT ARE ENERGY DRINKS?

They're everywhere. So-called "energy drinks" with names like Red Bull, Monster, 5-Hour Energy, and Rock Star are on the shelves in your local grocery store, in vending machines at the gym, and at the gas station. These drinks are frequently displayed next to sports hydration or fluid replacement drinks and have become increasingly popular with our youth.

"Energy" drinks should not be confused with sports drinks like Gatorade or Powerade. Sports drinks re-hydrate the body and contain sugars and electrolytes that the body uses to create energy. Energy drinks on the other hand, are not designed to replace lost fluids in the body, but rather are engineered to boost feelings of energy artificially with stimulants. The term "energy drink" refers to beverages that contain caffeine, sugar, stimulants, and other ingredients that may have unpredictable health effects when combined. It can be extremely difficult to tell from the label how much caffeine or other stimulants are in the product.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that adolescents get no more than 100 mg of caffeine a day and younger children shouldn't drink caffeinated beverages on a regular basis.⁷ Keep in mind that adolescents may consume caffeine from many sources including soda, coffee, tea, and chocolate. Consuming an energy drink on top of that can quickly cause them to exceed the 100mg limit.

Unfortunately these "energy" drinks have become a familiar presence in youth sports and the fact is, these drinks should NOT be consumed before, during, or after physical activity, especially by young people. Don't be fooled by the strategic advertising and marketing efforts. Many energy drink companies sponsor athletes and teams in order to appeal to kids who look up to these athletes and teams as role models.



Do you think athletes that endorse products that are dangerous to young athletes adhere to True Sport™ principals? Do you want your kids looking up to these athletes? Talk to your children.



Have you ever witnessed energy drinks being handed out to young athletes at your child's sporting events?

If your answer is yes, you're not alone. Sometimes free samples of these drinks are given out at tournaments, while other times parents will provide these drinks to their kids. The fact is many parents don't know the difference between energy drinks and sports drinks, but as a **True Sport™ Parent**, you will.

Do you know that drinking energy drinks around the time of an athletic competition can be very dangerous for children? Caffeine stimulates the central nervous system as well as the muscles in the heart, which can increase blood pressure. It can also disrupt sleep, cause anxiety, and irritate the stomach. When mixed with other stimulants, the effects can cause serious side effects and heart problems.

For example, medications used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are in a class of stimulants that increase the heart rate and blood pressure. Think about what can happen to a child's body when ADHD medication is mixed with caffeine and other stimulants, on top of strenuous exercise. What might happen to the child's heart?

Whether or not something drastic happens, the combination of caffeine, stimulants, and exercise puts unhealthy stress on the heart. The level of caffeine in an energy drink varies by the can and product, but it usually exceeds the maximum daily intake recommended for most children and teens.

Here are a few recovery tips that you can use with your children:

- ◆ Make sure they're sleeping at least 8 hours a night
- ◆ Keep them hydrated and make sure they're drinking at least 8, 8-ounce glasses of water a day. Increase this if they are active or if the weather is hot and humid
- ◆ Limit their sugar and fatty food intake

If you see an energy drink handed out at a youth sporting event, don't be afraid to ask questions about why it's there. What place do these products have at our children's athletic events? Why are they being marketed to our children? What are we telling our children when we give them an energy product before a competition? Are we telling them that it's okay to rely on a substance to increase their performance and give them energy? Is this a lesson that we want our children to learn?

Wouldn't it be better to teach them to listen to their body and recognize signs of fatigue? Recovery is an **ESSENTIAL** part of sport; it is a skill that we need to teach our children, so they know when something is too much. In the end,



they will become better athletes if they learn how to listen to their bodies, rather than taking a substance to mask symptoms.

All parents want the best for their children, so if you witness a parent providing an energy product to their child, they probably haven't been educated on the risks involved or evaluated the message that it sends. If you'd like, send them to the True Sport™ website, www.TrueSport.org, or to www.Supplement411.org, for more information.

Hydration

Hydration is one of the most important nutritional concerns for your athlete. More often than not, people wait to drink until they are thirsty. However, thirst is not an accurate indicator of how much fluid a person has lost. Encourage your young athlete to drink water before he's actually thirsty. When athletes only drink enough to quench their thirst, they may still be dehydrated. For best results:



- ◆ Encourage your athlete to drink water throughout the day
- ◆ Make sure he keeps a bottle of fluid available when working out and encourage him to drink as often as desired
- ◆ Do not restrict fluids before, during, or after exercise
- ◆ Do not rely on thirst as an indicator

Parents and coaches have expressed concern that sports drinks contain too much sodium and sugar. While the sugar content may seem high in sports drinks, if your athlete is exercising for 60 minutes or more, the sports drink will maintain blood glucose levels at a time when muscle glycogen stores are diminished. This allows carbohydrate utilization and energy production to continue at high rates. If your athlete is exercising lightly or for less than 60 minutes, water may be the better option for hydration. As for the sodium content, a sports drink usually has a sodium content similar to that of a cup of reduced-fat milk. Most Americans consume too much sodium through processed and convenience foods, not through sports drinks.

For more information on hydration and how to fuel your athlete, check out the True Sport™ Nutrition Guide, available on www.TrueSport.org/Nutrition.





What about dietary supplements? Are they safe for my child to take?

First of all, when you hear the phrase, “dietary supplements,” what comes to mind?

For clarification, dietary supplements are products containing dietary or nutritional ingredients intended to supplement the diet. They are not intended to be consumed as a meal or as a meal replacement. They are taken by mouth, but can come in many forms - tablet, capsule, powder, liquid, etc. These include vitamins, minerals, herbs, amino acids, protein powders, energy products, and more. Supplements are everywhere - online, in supermarkets, health food stores, drug stores, and even at the gas station.

Considering this clarification of dietary supplements, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do I give my child dietary supplements? If so, why?
2. How do I know if my child actually needs a dietary supplement?
3. Do I know what kind of supplementation he/she needs?
4. Do I know what ingredients are in my child’s dietary supplements?
5. Do I know where the ingredients come from and who manufactures them?
6. Are my child’s supplements regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)?
7. Do supplements have to go through an approval process before they are put on the shelves?
8. If the product claims it’s all natural, does that mean it’s safe?

If you don’t know all of the answers to these questions, it’s OKAY, not many people do. Our aim is to help you become a more educated and informed consumer.



Do you give your child dietary supplements?

If you're contemplating giving your child a supplement, the process should start with assessing whether a dietary supplement is truly needed. Always consult with a health care professional or dietician to determine whether vitamin and mineral supplementation is needed to maintain optimal health for your child.

It is also extremely important to discuss the dosage with your health care professional. The form and dosage of ingredients commonly found in supplements may cause a health risk if someone ingests more than the daily intake recommendation. More is not necessarily better.

If you've already done this, that's great! You have made a significant step in the right direction.



Do you know what ingredients are in the supplements your child is taking?

Due to minimal regulations in the supplement industry, some products are mislabeled, include too much or too little of intended ingredients, are contaminated by substances such as pesticides or heavy metals, or may be inadvertently tainted with sport-prohibited or potent substances due to cross-contamination. There certainly are supplements that are safe and pure, but it is possible for one batch of a product, for example, to become contaminated with a dangerous or sport-prohibited substance when manufacturing equipment isn't cleaned properly and contains remnants of ingredients from a previous product. This is similar to what can happen in a factory that manufactures nut products, alongside other products like cereals and breads. If the machines aren't cleaned correctly or if particles or dust permeate manufacturing areas, the breads or cereals can contain remnants or traces of the nuts, which can be potentially dangerous to those with nut allergies.

In some cases, bad actors in the industry purposely spike products with illicit and illegal substances to provide rapid and desirable results, thereby driving sales, but causing potentially severe health consequences.



How can I be a smart consumer?

Many Americans believe that they don't get enough vitamins and minerals in their diet, so they make up for it with dietary supplements. Others may seek them out for a faster recovery, or even a competitive edge. However, the reality is, there is no substitute or shortcut to a healthy, well-balanced diet, and making wise food and beverage choices is crucial for optimal performance



and repairing injured tissues. If possible, it is best to try and obtain all vitamins and minerals from food. We realize that this is not always possible and this is why so many people turn to supplementation.

Many people believe that if a supplement makes it on the shelf, it must be safe, because if it was unsafe, someone would have done something about it. **THIS IS NOT TRUE.** The FDA does not approve, review, or test supplements before they are sold. Because of the laws surrounding the supplement industry, the FDA has to take a reactive approach rather than a proactive one.

Here are a few recent examples of mislabeled or contaminated products that were recalled by the FDA in 2012:

- ◆ A baby vitamin was recalled for containing excessive iodine, which can affect the thyroid.
- ◆ An herbal spray for colds and cold sores was recalled because of an unsterile manufacturing environment.
- ◆ A calcium-vitamin D product was recalled because the contents of the pill were actually triple strength Glucosamine Chondroitin, rather than calcium/vitamin D, causing a very serious health risk to those with a shellfish allergy because glucosamine is often made from shellfish.
- ◆ Ten supplement manufacturers were sent warning letters for marketing a product called DMAA (also referred to as geranium extract or methylhexanamine), without providing evidence of its safety. DMAA is known to narrow the blood vessels and arteries, which may elevate blood pressure and can lead to cardiovascular problems. Forty-two adverse event reports were submitted to the FDA before the warning letters were sent.

These are just four examples. For more information on FDA recalls, visit www.fda.gov/Food/DietarySupplements/Alerts/default.htm



In 2009, the Government Accountability Office revealed that 24% of supplement products tested were contaminated in some way. That number is alarmingly high, so it's important that you do your research to make sure that you're actually buying what you think you are. There are good supplement companies out there, but it's important to do the research before you purchase.

Here are a few suggestions of things to look for when researching a supplement product:

- ◆ Evaluate the ingredient list - is there anything on the ingredient list that you aren't familiar with? Are there a lot of complicated ingredients? If so, do you think your child really needs everything on the label?
- ◆ When looking for a supplement, keep in mind that "natural" does not mean safe and more is not necessarily better when it comes to supplementation. The form and dosage of ingredients commonly found in supplements may cause a health risk if someone (especially a child) ingests more than the daily intake recommendation. Many ingredients in dietary supplements are highly manufactured or come from places that do not conduct organic farming. Some "natural" herbs that you think are organic contain dangerous levels of heavy metals or pesticides, or are stored in a way that causes them to get filthy or contaminated with bugs, animal droppings, or other (undesirable) plant material.
- ◆ Does the supplement product make outrageous promises? When you evaluate the claims made by the manufacturer of a dietary supplement, you should think about whether the claims are likely to be true. If the claims made by a manufacturer sound too good to be true, they probably are. Remember that their goal is for you to purchase their product. Avoid supplements that make lofty promises.
- ◆ Are there reputable research reports about efficacy? The law doesn't require a product to be effective in order to be sold. The supplement company may in fact be selling healthy supplements, but make no mistake, it is in the best interest of the company to stay in business by making a profit.



- ◆ Has the product been evaluated and tested by a credible third-party testing organization? This might take some investigating on the manufacturer's website, but if the supplement manufacturer pays for third party testing, the chances of the supplement being contaminated or intentionally spiked with harmful ingredients are significantly less.
- ◆ Does the supplement manufacturer comply with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)? If they do, they will promote it on their website and sometimes on the bottle as well. By law, supplement manufacturers are required to comply with GMPs. However, the FDA can only inspect a fraction of all manufacturers and most supplement manufacturers have never even been inspected by the FDA.

If you take the above precautions your chances of purchasing a contaminated or intentionally-spiked supplement are significantly less, but because of the lack of regulation, there are no guarantees.

Gateway Supplements

As a parent, you are bound to be asked by your children about the use of performance supplements (especially as they hit their teenage years) such as creatine or protein powders. Be advised, there can be a connection between "supplementation" and "doping" to enhance performance.



An article published in 2011 in the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports* found that dietary supplement users had a more positive attitude toward illegal doping and expressed a greater belief that illegal doping is effective. When presented with scenarios that performance-enhancing substances are effective and increase winning, performance supplement users were more in favor of competing in situations that allow doping. The authors concluded that their research supported the gateway hypothesis: athletes who use "legal" performance enhancement practices, such as performance-enhancing supplementation, appear to personify an "at risk" group who may progress toward illegal doping.⁸

A lifetime of engaging in performance-enhancing behaviors, for example, using supplements with the belief that they will improve performance, may lead to the use of stronger substances and full-fledged doping. One of the reasons this might be the case is that people's beliefs about the effectiveness of dietary supplements go unchallenged and they want bigger and better results, so they

start using stronger substances. Using dietary supplements does not cause people to become users of performance-enhancing drugs. However, individuals who believe they can get a magic solution out of a bottle are in a dangerous position because they feel it is okay to rely on a crutch, rather than do the hard work.

If I want to avoid supplementation, how can I balance our busy lifestyle with eating healthy?

Between school, after-school activities, and homework, life is busy and often hectic for families. It's easy to grab fast food on the run to ensure your child is eating, but given your busy lifestyle, what can you do to ensure that your child is hydrating and getting the nutrition that he needs?

Here are a few suggestions:



- ◆ Plan ahead: Pack your own meals if you know you're going to be away from the house for extended periods of time. If need be, make meals and pack snacks the night before.
- ◆ It's always wiser for parents to pack a cooler from home than to rely on the food at a concession stand or a fast food restaurant. Find foods that travel well (fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts) and bring more than you think you'll need.
- ◆ Bring lots of water, sports drinks, and/or natural fruit juice to aid in hydration. Fresh fruit can also aid in hydration because of the water content present in most fruit.
- ◆ Don't let your child get too hungry. That's when cravings for unhealthy foods kick in. Make sure you're ready for moments when hunger strikes. Dried or fresh fruits, sliced vegetables, mixed nuts, beef/turkey jerky, granola, or cereals stay fresh and transport easily.
- ◆ If you are in a bind and have to stop for fast food, make sure your child orders something that is steamed, grilled, roasted, or baked. It's increasingly easier to find healthy, convenient alternatives to fried foods on fast food menus. Encourage your child to try an entrée-sized salad. Avoid anything fried, high fat add-ons like mayo or other special sauces, and extra cheese. Make sure your child orders water, rather than soda.
- ◆ Limit the amount of sugar in your child's diet.
- ◆ Make sure your child is eating breakfast.
- ◆ Set a good example. If you want your child to eat more fruits, vegetables or whole grains, then be sure to make those same changes to your own dietary habits. If your child sees you breaking the rules, he certainly will too.





True Sport™ Parent Action Plan

TRUE SPORT™ PARENT ACTION PLAN

What messages are you sending? Often parents may do things without realizing how their actions undermine the positive messages they want their athletes to gain.

- ◆ Do you practice what you preach when it comes to making good nutritional and hydration choices? Remember, young athletes watch their role models very carefully and your actions have a profound influence on their behavior.
- ◆ Do you maintain consistent messaging regarding the value of effort and learning? Be especially mindful of how you react in emotionally charged moments in competition.
- ◆ Most importantly, pay attention to mixed messages regarding supplements, drugs, and performance-enhancing substances that your athlete receives, from you and others. TV advertisements, sports magazines, and pro athletes promote pills, drinks, and powders that all promise performance gains. While many of these products are legal, this does not mean they are healthy or even safe to use. Discuss, emphasize, and encourage personal effort over the search for a quick fix.

As a True Sport Parent, what can you do?

- ◆ Understand the pressures that can be a part of the youth sport culture.
- ◆ Walk your talk - be clear on your expectations and beliefs regarding True Sport™ - foster the True Sport™ Principles with your athlete.
- ◆ Talk and listen to your athlete; open communication lines are very important.
- ◆ Focus your pre-and post-game conversation on effort, goals, and experiences as well as game results.
- ◆ Support the development of personal intrinsic motivation.
- ◆ Emphasize and celebrate learning and effort over the outcome and winning.
- ◆ Encourage your athlete to keep his/her perspective both in victory and defeat.
- ◆ Maintain a positive open relationship with your child's coach. Let the coach do the coaching during the game, but ask questions about his/her approach and philosophies.
- ◆ Be an informed consumer and make educated decisions about energy drinks and supplements.
- ◆ Practice healthy nutrition habits for your athlete's optimum health and performance.
- ◆ Encourage your athlete to have fun.

Visit www.TrueSport.org/Parent for more ideas regarding an action plan.

REFERENCES

- ¹ U.S. Anti-Doping Agency. (2011). *What Sport Means in America: A Study of Sport's Role in Society*. Colorado Springs: USADA.
- ² Gould, D., Lauer, L., Rolo, C., Jannes, C., Sie Pennisi, N., (2004). *Understanding the Role Parents Play in Junior Tennis Success: Phases 1 & 2: Perceptions of Junior Coaches*. A USTA Research Grant Executive Summary.
- ³ Rosen, A. (1967). *Baseball and your boy*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.
- ⁴ Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2011). *Monitoring the Future National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Overview of key Findings, 2010*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.
- ⁵ Borba, M. (2009). *The Big Book of Parenting Solutions: 101 Answers to your Everyday Challenges and Wildest Worries*. San Francisco: Wiley, John & Sons Incorporated.
- ⁶ Seifert, Sara M., Schaechter Judith L., Hershoshin Eugene R., and Lipshultz Steven E. (2011). "Health Effects of Energy Drinks on Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults." *Pediatrics*. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/02/14/peds.2009-3592>
- ⁷ Backhouse, S.H., Whitaker, L., Petróczi. (2011). "Gateway to doping? Supplement use in the context of preferred competitive situations, doping attitude, beliefs, and norms." *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0838.2011.01374.x>





TrueSport™

Powered by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA)

©2012 USADA.

True Sport, the True Sport logo, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, USADA, and the USADA logo are pending or registered trademarks of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency. All Rights Reserved.

Phone: 719.323.6868

E-mail: truesport@truesport.org

www.TrueSport.org

facebook.com/truesportusa

twitter.com/truesport

