

Consequences of doping

By the end of this module you should be able to:

- 1 Identify situations when athletes may be more vulnerable to doping and determine strategies to cope with these situations.
- 2 Recognize and reflect on the impact of a doping decision on psychological and physical health and the wider personal and social consequences.
- 3 Determine strategies to promote physical and mental health and prevent doping.

Our aim is to help you understand the **consequences of doping** so that you can make **informed decisions** that protect you, your **health** and your right to participate in **clean sport**.

Lesson 1

Let's explore vulnerability

- The majority of athletes do not dope
- You can reach the top in your sport without doping
- Many who doped did not want to they felt desperate and vulnerable
- Some athletes doped by accident they weren't educated or did not follow the right advice
- Many athletes were pressured by their teammates, coach or other support personnel to dope
- Many athletes who did use banned substances felt so ill from the side effects that their performance actually got worse
- The psychological stress of doping can negatively impact performance as well as the relationships athletes have with those close to them especially if they are hiding their doping behavior
- And lastly, there is no magic pill – doping on its own does not equal a brilliant sporting performance

But... athletes can face "**moments of vulnerability**". This means there can be times in an athlete's career when:

They feel frustrated, anxious or depressed

They are so close to "making it" but still can't quite reach the next level

Life is tough, and it affects their focus in training

Their performance in competition is not what they want

Nothing seems to be working

So, let's explore moments of vulnerability so you can reflect on these and find ways to cope with these situations. It is good to know that resilience and coping skills can be developed and improved.

Example

A story of an athlete

Athlete Z is a high performing athlete. After an intense training session, he starts to experience knee pain. The following morning it gets worse and becomes more intense over the next few days. He goes to see the team physician who advises him to rest and stop training for 4 to 6 weeks, and then resume only very light training for the following 2 weeks afterwards, if the injury improves.

His next competition is 8 weeks. Losing this training time means he won't be able to peak in time for the competition. He knows it is very unlikely he will perform to his best. This is a big problem. If he misses achieving the qualifying time for the World Championships he is not going to be selected for the team. And his funding could be cut if he is not selected. Pressure and frustration is all that he feels.

Then, one of Athlete Z's teammates calls him to ask why he hasn't been at training. Athlete Z explains. His teammate suggests that Athlete Z visit the assistant physician. He share that when the top athlete of their training group was injured he recovered very quickly and was back to full training within weeks. In fact, he was training even harder than before.

Apparently, the assistant physician gave him a medication that contained a banned substance as he was unlikely to be tested so no one would know.

What would your advice be to Athlete Z in this situation? Think about this for a moment.

Just like Athlete Z, we know that athletes experience difficult moments in their careers where important decisions need to be made.

Let's check out the following athlete's experiences.

Athlete 1

"A vulnerable period for me was before events that were critical to my career. I felt huge pressure and anxiety to perform.

I was tempted to dope, at times, knowing I could take something to calm my anxiety and help me focus."

"Instead I spoke to my coach. She helped me prepare mentally before each competition using visualization and breathing techniques. Also, she helped me concentrate on my competition routine and race plan rather than worrying about the end performance."

Athlete 2

"There was a period when everyone in my training group seemed to be progressing much faster than me. I saw some of the squad members receive contracts with the top teams. I found this frustrating, trying harder in training which then led to injury. I was tempted to take shortcuts. I didn't know what else to do."

"I spoke to one of my friends on the team. They understood immediately and shared that when they were a junior, the same thing happened. And that it took them longer to break through to the senior team, but they just kept persevering and believing that one day it would happen.

They told me to speak to the coach. My coach understood how I felt and reminded me that athletes progress at different rates. I started to focus on my own training and discussed with my coach some changes to my training schedule and nutritional practices."

Athlete 3

“The most difficult moment in my career was when my dad died. It was 3 weeks before the World Championships. My dad and I were close – he was the reason I did sport and he supported me throughout my career. He was the rock that kept me grounded and focused... and he believed in me. I was devastated. This was unexpected.”

“Understanding my difficulties, my coach and team mates consoled and helped me and I finally overcame it.”

Every athlete, at some point in their career, is vulnerable.

What makes a great athlete is the ability to be resilient and, importantly, to seek help to cope... in the right, ethical way.

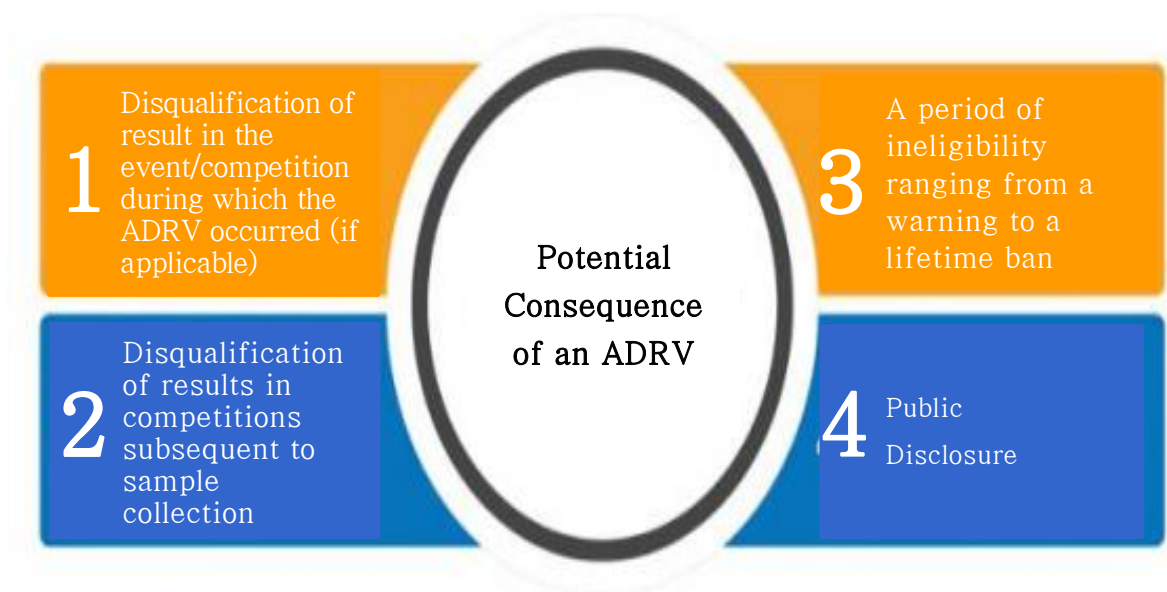
Athletes should know that when they feel vulnerable, there are many factors which can help him/her, should be able to control his/her emotions and make up the correct decisions.

Lesson 2

Consequences of doping

Doping, is it that big of a deal?

YES! When athletes dope there are consequences and these consequences can be wide reaching perhaps more than you thought. Not only is there a ban from all sport but they also affect an athlete's career and their personal life.



A sanction for doping can go from a warning or reprimand to a life time ban from all sport.

Sanctions vary depending on the Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) committed.



Presence



Use



Possession

For Presence/Use, and Possession, 3 of the 11 ADRVs, likely sanctions are:

If it is a specified substance

The period of ineligibility is 2 years unless the Anti-Doping Organization (ADO) can demonstrate that it was intentional – then it will be 4 years.

Specified substances are generally found more easily in over the counter medications or in contaminated supplements and are more likely to be used for a purpose other than enhancement of sport performance.

If it is non-specified substance

The period of ineligibility is 4 years, unless the athlete can demonstrate that it was not intentional – then it will be 2 years.

Be careful about the meaning of "intention" even if an athlete uses a banned substance by accident (so not intentionally trying to cheat) but ignores the risks associated with certain products and does nothing to mitigate these risks it could still be classified as intentional.

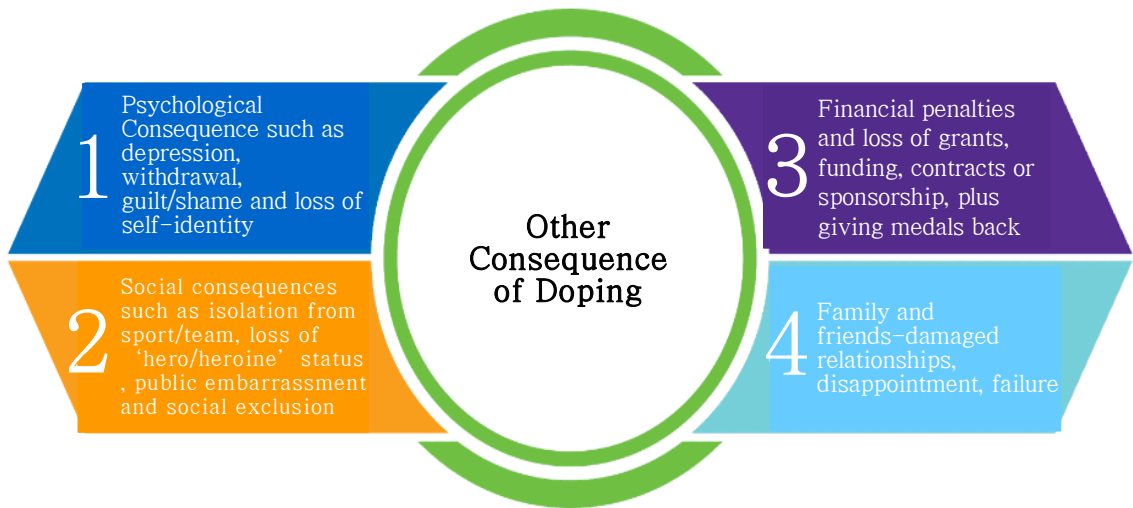
As a general rule, athletes need to demonstrate how the substance entered their body (the origin of the substance) to prove their behavior was not intentional. This can include, for example, analyzing the supplement the athlete used if they claim that the prohibited substance came from a contaminated supplement.

If an athlete chooses to use a supplement, it is recommended that they keep a small amount so that it can be analyzed, should the athlete test positive.

Proving that they didn't use the prohibited substance intentionally can be difficult to do and in most cases, athletes who test positive for a non-specified substance still end up with a 4-year period of ineligibility. And yes, that means 4-years not participating in sport.

Remember that multiple ADRVs, the presence of multiple substances may increase the sanction the athlete faces.

Athletes who dope experience a range of consequences...



As well as...

- Long term health issues
- Stigma – public scrutiny, labeled a drug cheat
- Loss of identity through not being able to participate in sport,
- End of career
- Loss of competition results, medals, titles, records, prize money
- Guilt, shame, embarrassment
- Loss of friends

The consequences of doping far outweigh any temporary moment of glory.

How everyone is impacted

Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) impact the athlete **AND** others close to the athlete such as: friends, partners and family. It is these consequences which are frequently the most difficult for athletes to deal with.

Also keep in mind that ADRVs for athletes who are part of a team sport might lead to sanctions for the entire team. For example, the whole team may experience loss of points, disqualification from a competition or event, or other sanction.

Health consequences

The use of drugs or medication without a medical need or medical advice are highly likely to put your health at risk.

When using banned substances there is an increased risk of:

- Substance dependency
- Addiction
- Wider drug use and habits
- Chronic illness
- Side effects
- Psychological harm
- Behavior changes
- Physiological changes that in the worst case can be irreversible

Let' s check some examples of adverse effects of banned substance and methods

**Testosterone
and synthetic
derivatives**

**Human growth
hormone**

**Beta-2
agonists**

Diuretics

Narcotics

Steroids

Testosterone and synthetic derivatives:

- Mood and behavioral disorders
- Depression and anxiety
- Liver tumors, reduced kidney function

Human growth hormone:

- Hypertension
- Heart failure
- Diabetes

Beta-2 agonists :

- Heart palpitation and sweating
- Headaches and nausea
- Tremor/shaking and muscle spasm

Diuretics :

- Dizziness or even fainting
- Dehydration
- Muscle cramps
- Loss of coordination and balance
- Confusion, mental changes or moodiness
- Cardiac Disorders

Narcotics :

- Abnormal changes in behavior and emotions
- Lack of motivation and performance in school, work and sports
- Dependency
- Addiction and combination of other illicit drugs

Steroids :

- Psychological dependence
- Mood swings
- Liver disease
- Cardiovascular disease
- High blood pressure
- Sexual side effects
- Overdose with respiratory depression and death

Even in small doses, or short term use, using banned substances may still result in irreversible harm to your health. So, remember:

Always seek medical advice before taking any medication!

One last thing...

Don' t forget... ADOs have up to **10 years** to determine an ADRV.

So, even if you get tempted to dope, remember that many ADOs store athlete samples so they can be reanalyzed up to 10 years after the sample collection. Even those who run Major Events such as World Championships or the Olympic and Paralympic Games do this.

Final word

- All athletes experience vulnerable periods in their careers
- Identify those vulnerable moments for you and have a plan to deal with them, keeping true to your values and the spirit of sport
- Seek help from physicians, coaches and family, when you need
- Develop strategies to maintain your physical and mental health when you need to dig deep to cope

- Consequences of doping far outweigh any temporary moment of glory
- No real athlete wants a hollow victory – cheating to gain victory is dishonorable. They are always well aware and conscious