

HEALTH ALERT!

Sports Supplements Health Warning

(NAPSA)—With suggestive names like Animal Max, Teen Advantage Creatine and Ripped Fuel, sports supplements can now be purchased readily at many stores and online. Lured by claims of better bodies and athletic performance, more and more teenagers are turning to these over-the-counter substances.

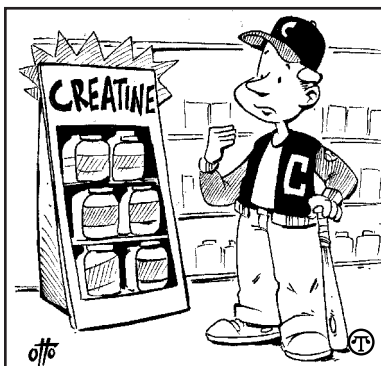
A recent study found six percent of youngsters aged 15 and 16 and eight percent of 17- and 18-year-olds have taken a sports supplement. About one in four said they knew someone who took the products.

While makers claim these pills, drinks and powders are harmless, the government does not regulate them and there are no reliable studies proving their long-term safety.

"The standards of medical ethics would never allow the experiment that is being conducted on our nation's children," said Bernard Griesemer, M.D., a pediatric sports medicine specialist. "Unregulated dietary supplements such as andro may be causing harm to children and teens, but today's users may not feel the full effect of that harm until they are adults."

To provide reliable information to young athletes, parents and coaches, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association has published at www.healthycompetition.org a list of some of the most widely marketed sports supplements that contain potentially harmful substances. They contain one of three ingredients that may cause health problems. These are:

- **Androstenedione (andro)** is used in the hopes of increasing muscle size. It can cause premature puberty and stunted growth in adolescents; prostate trouble, feminization and large breasts in men; and increase the risk of heart disease by ten to 15 percent in



Sports supplements may pose health dangers to young athletes, medical experts warn.

everyone, because it lowers levels of the "good" cholesterol, HDL. A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found andro had no effect on the ability to gain strength and muscle.

- **Creatine**, taken to increase energy, may lead to weight gain, mainly in the form of retained water, and may cause muscle cramps and kidney problems. According to a Mount Sinai School of Medicine study, 44 percent of high school senior athletes report using creatine.

- **Ephedra (Ma Huang)**, is an herbal stimulant that acts like "speed" and may cause heart problems. The FDA warns that ephedra may have been responsible for several deaths and hundreds of injuries.

"The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association created www.healthycompetition.org as a place to go for reliable information about a growing problem for teenagers, the pressure to take potentially dangerous supplements to do better in sports," said Allan Korn, M.D., medical director for the Healthy Competition Foundation. "We give people the tools they need to encourage healthy choices and fair play for everyone."

Common Products Containing Andro, Creatine and Ephedra:

Androstenedione*

3-Andro Xtreme
Andro-Gen
Andro-Stack
Androstat
Nor Andro Ripped Fuel Stack
Nor-Stak
Nor-Tek

* Related compounds include 19-norandrostenedione, androstenediol, and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA).

Creatine

Animal Max
ATP Advantage
Creaject
Creatine Booster
Creatine Fizz Fuel
Effervescent Creatine Elite
LifeSmart's Creatine Chews
Power Creatine
SyntheVol
Teen Advantage Creatine Serum
Xtra Advantage Creatine Serum

Ephedra (Ma Huang)

Amphetra-Lean
Diet Boost
Diet Fuel
Dyma-Burn Xtreme
Energel
Herbal Phen-fen
Herbalife
Metabolife 356
Metab-O-Lite
Metacuts
Ripped Force
Ripped Fuel
Thermo Speed
Trim Fast
Ultimate Energizer
Ultimate Orange