

Community Pharmacy Quick Guide

Supplying Medicines to Athletes (OTC & Dispensing)

Why this matters

- **Anti-doping operates under strict liability:** the athlete is responsible for anything found in their body, even if taken unintentionally.
- Many OTC and Pharmacy (P) medicines contain substances that may be prohibited or conditionally allowed depending on dose, route, timing, and competition status.

Identify an athlete

Ask at the point of sale or supply:

- “Are you a competitive athlete or subject to drug testing?”
- “What sport do you compete in?”

Note: Prohibited status can vary by sport and by In-Competition vs Out-of-Competition.

Always ask when supplying:

- Cold and flu products
- Pain relief
- Asthma medicines
- Steroids / glucocorticoids
- Hormonal medicines
- Injectable products
- “Performance” or sports-related products

Check the medicine properly

For medicines sold or dispensed in the UK, use **Global DRO** www.globaldro.com

1. Go to www.globaldro.com
2. Select Healthcare professional, the sport, and UK as the nation of purchase
3. Search by brand name and active ingredient(s) (check combinations carefully)
4. Confirm status In-Competition *and* Out-of-Competition
5. Encourage the athlete to save or print the Global DRO reference number

High-risk product groups – pause and check

Be particularly cautious with:

- Cold / flu combinations and decongestants
- Asthma inhalers (dose / route dependent)
- Glucocorticoids / steroids (route and timing critical)
- Hormonal and endocrine medicines
- Injectables (often restricted; may require a TUE)

If unsure, check Global DRO and/or WADA Prohibited List.

Supplements

- Supplements are not medicines
- They may be contaminated with prohibited substances, even if not listed on the label
- Global DRO does not confirm supplement status
- Strong caution should always be advised

Therapeutic Use Exemptions (TUEs)

Some athletes require a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) for clinically necessary treatment.

If a required medicine appears prohibited:

- Advise prompt contact with TUE Committee
e.g. 2026 Glasgow Games contact is tue@commonwealthsport.com
- Do not give detailed TUE advice – signpost only

Professional language

Use consistent wording such as:

“Information only: this product would appear to be WADA permitted. Final responsibility for anti-doping compliance remains with the athlete.”

- Avoid absolute statements unless supported by a documented Global DRO result

Documentation

Good practice to document in PMR

- Athlete identified and sport
- Medicine checked
- Global DRO reference number
- Advice or signposting given

Quick links (staff reference)

- **UK Anti-Doping (UKAD):** www.ukad.org.uk
- **Global DRO:** www.globaldro.com
- **WADA Prohibited List:** www.wada-ama.org/en/prohibited-list
- **BNF – Drugs and Sport:** bnf.nice.org.uk/medicines-guidance/drugs-and-sport

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Central Prescribing Team & Community Pharmacy Development Team
This guidance supports consistent practice across NHSGCC community pharmacies.

Version 1.1 3rd July 2026