

## Figuring out the Doping Control Process

Testing is one of the tools used by anti-doping organisations (i.e., national anti-doping organisations, international sports federations, major sports events organisers, and delegated third parties such as the [International Testing Agency](#)) to protect the health of athletes, level the playing field, and maintain the integrity of sport.

Doping is defined as the occurrence of one or more of 11 anti-doping rule violations (ADRV) as described in the [World Anti-Doping Code](#) (WADC). Testing takes place to obtain analytical evidence of several ADRV, in particular the presence of a prohibited substance in an athlete's sample, and the use or attempted use by an athlete of a prohibited substance or method.

Any athlete who operates under the jurisdiction of an anti-doping organisation (ADO) and is subject to their anti-doping rules can be tested anytime and anywhere. ADOs can conduct testing both 'in-competition' and 'out-of-competition' depending on a risk assessment for each sport and test distribution planning. The WADC stipulates the prohibited substances and methods that can be tested in both situations.

The doping control process involves **four key steps** (*athlete selection, athlete notification, sample collection, form completion*). During each of these steps, tested athletes have [rights and responsibilities](#), such as e.g., being accompanied by a representative or an interpreter, asking questions, producing identification, or keeping therapeutic use exemptions and whereabouts up to date.



**Athlete Selection** There are three criteria for which an athlete can be selected for doping control: athletic performance (e.g., winning a medal or a competition), random selection, and targeting for a specific reason (e.g., after anonymous revelation of an ADRV, or suspicious athlete biological passport).

**Athlete Notification** Once an athlete has been selected, he/she is notified by a doping control officer (DCO) which ADO will conduct the test and what type of testing will take place. The DCO informs the athlete about his/her rights and responsibilities.

**Sample Collection** DCOs can conduct urine and/or blood testing. After choosing a collection vessel or blood collection kit, athletes need to provide a urine or blood sample. For urine sample collection, the DCO witnesses the passing of the sample when the athlete is ready to provide it. For blood testing, a health professional collects the sample. The sample is then divided into two bottles or tubes (A/B, in case a second analysis is to be performed due to a 'positive' result) which are both sealed in presence of the athlete.

**Form Completion** The athlete and the DCO fill out a form on which they can record any comment on the control process. Before signing the form, athletes are also invited to carefully

declare any medication or supplements they have used over the last 7 days. The athlete receives a print or digital copy of the doping control form.

**What happens to the sample after collection?** The sample is sent together with the anonymised control form to a [laboratory accredited](#) by the World Anti-Doping Agency. Samples are then subjected to analyses using a large array of cutting-edge scientific techniques. The results will finally be reported to the relevant ADO. Should the athlete be tested positive for any prohibited substance or method, he/she may face a sanction as established by the WADC.