

Creatine & Athletes

Possible Risks & No Long Term Research

The following is provided courtesy of Jack Medina MA, President, Designs For Fitness

The American College Of Sports Medicine has stated that though some of the research being done shows many gains in strength and muscle bulk for those using Creatine, there is NO long term research that has been done. I have seen many of the short term studies and I must admit they are impressive. However, it is the long term results I am worried about.

An article was recently released from the French linking this popular training supplement to a potential risk of cancer. Their report said "potential risks associated with taking Creatine were currently insufficiently evaluated", and that the product was of little benefit to athletes hoping to "improve performance" (not just add muscle bulk).

Creatine is an Amino Acid produced naturally by the liver and kidneys and stored (naturally in muscles). The NCAA is so skeptical of this substance (and like substances) that it has banned member schools from giving it to their athletes. "The long term safety of this supplement is NOT known; our scientists were concerned that there is not enough research to make us confident of the long term effects of usage" (Tom Hansen, Commissioner of the Pacific 10 Conference which initiated the measure). The increased muscle bulk resulting from the use of Creatine supplements is largely due to water retention. This is the same as with steroids and human growth hormone (HGH) which can be extremely dangerous!

The side effects that are possible scare me too:

- hyper-hydration of the muscle – retaining too much water; the heart is a muscle, and if it retains too much water you can die
- dehydration of the muscle – some athletes instead of retaining water, lose it; seventy eight percent of a muscle is water, and if a muscle loses water you immediately lose strength
- severe muscle cramping – a professional football player recently ruptured a quadricep muscle jogging onto the field for the introductions because of this problem
- liver and kidney problems are starting to be noticed, and lately problems with the spleen

ATP is the chemical held in the muscle cell which allows the muscle to contract. Creatine, which is GOD given, allows the muscle to recover the ATP . Therefore, the more Creatine in the cell, the faster the recovery after a bout of exercise, therefore more work can be done in a shorter amount of time, therefore quicker strength gains.

How would you feel as a parent if I told your son, "go ahead and take the Creatine, the risk involved is minimal" – then 7 years from now he has cancer of the liver because I didn't

know? Schools like Michigan State University and UCLA do not allow any supplements of any kind in their athletic programs. This is the kind of school I would want my son to attend.

You can contact the American College of Sports Medicine in Indianapolis, Indiana and request information on their stance regarding Creatine.

I personally, as a coach and trainer, would NEVER allow an athlete to take a substance where there is no long term research available. Your son already has enough Creatine in his body to do the job if he is just trained right. I question the integrity of any coach that would recommend this to an athlete – they simply do not know what they are possibly doing.

I sincerely hope the information I have given you helps. If you have additional questions let me know.

Jack Medina

President, Designs For Fitness

Jack Medina has an DVD / CD available called "Run Faster, Jump Higher, Play Longer and Stronger" that talks about energy systems and what they do, how to train an energy system, and design and exercise program. If you would like to have it sent to you, please email info@tommyfit.ca or call 604.607.1231.

For more information on how proper nutrition affects an athlete's body, go to www.tommyfit.ca or phone 604.607.1231.
