

# TRAMADOL

Important change coming on 1 January 2024



## What is changing?

From 1 January 2024, **tramadol** will be banned during the in-competition period only.

### What is tramadol?



Tramadol is a type of medication that is used to relieve and treat moderate to severe pain.

### Why is tramadol banned?

For any substance to appear on the Prohibited List, it must meet 2 out of 3 criteria;

- It has the potential to enhance or enhances sport performance.
- It represents an actual or potential health risk to the athletes.
- It violates the spirit of sport.

Tramadol can cause side effects such as physical dependence, opiate addiction, and overdose issues which poses a health risk to athletes. A few recent studies confirmed the potential to enhance physical performance in certain activities.

### What is the in-competition period?

The in-competition period usually begins at 11:59pm the day before the competition starts.



Athletes should check with their International Federation (IF) to see if the in-competition period is different for their sport.

## What if...



In some cases, a TUE may be required even if the tramadol was taken during the out-of-competition (OoC) period. The timing of when tramadol is taken is important for athletes to be aware of – especially if the medication is taken close to the in-competition period during what is called a [washout period](#).

If athletes need to take tramadol during the in-competition period to treat a diagnosed medical condition, they must apply for a **Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE)**. Athletes and athlete support personnel (ASP) should contact their National Anti-Doping Organization (NADO), IF or the Major Event Organization for more information on how and when to apply.

If an athlete takes tramadol out-of-competition (OoC) and is tested in-competition, they are allowed to apply retroactively for a TUE. Therefore, athletes and their medical professionals should be prepared with medical file/evidence necessary in case they need to apply for a retroactive TUE.



**Important:** TUEs must meet the criteria in order to be granted. Athletes and their medical professionals must ensure they have the necessary medical documentation to support their TUE application. If the TUE is not approved the athlete may face an Anti-Doping Rule Violation.

## What is a washout period?

It is **important** for athletes and their ASP to be aware of the possibility of an athlete testing positive for a substance given out-of-competition that is only banned in-competition.

For this reason, it is important for athletes and their ASP to be aware of how long it takes for a substance, in this case **tramadol**, to leave the body and therefore reduce the risk of being detected in an athlete's sample.

This is known as the washout period.

Depending on when **tramadol** is taken and the dose, athletes are at risk of a positive test if the substance has not been eliminated from the athlete's system before the in-competition period.

**Remember:** Substances banned only in-competition that are used during the out-of-competition period can be a risk for athletes. If athletes are tested in-competition they may return a positive test even if the substance was used out-of-competition.



## What do athletes need to do?

-  **Strict liability:** Be aware of and understand the risks of inadvertent doping related to tramadol usage
-  **Speak** with their medical professional and coach to ensure they are aware of the change in status for tramadol
-  **Ask** their medical professional if an alternative medication is possible
-  **Check** the competition and the IF rules to understand when the in-competition period starts
-  **Prepare** a complete medical file in case a TUE is needed and check with their NADO or IF for the TUE application process
-  **Learn** more about the Prohibited List and TUEs on [ADEL](#)

## Why is this news important?

Monitoring data shows that tramadol has been used in certain sports. Athletes, coaches, medical professionals and wider support personnel need to be aware of this change to avoid athletes testing positive inadvertently.

### Don't forget!

From 1 January 2024, **tramadol** will be banned during the in-competition period only.

