Beta 2 Agonists

What are they?

Beta-2-adrenoreceptor (beta-2) agonists are drugs that act as bronchodilators. The drugs stimulate the airways in the lungs (bronchi) to open wider, permitting more air to pass.

The drugs are especially helpful to asthmatics, who can suffer from insufficient air supply to the lungs due to narrowing of the bronchi. Athletes who take beta-2 agonists can also improve their athletic performance, due to the increased infusion of air.

As an exception formoterol, salbuterol, salmeterol and terbutaline, when administered by inhalation, to prevent and/or treat asthma and exercise-induced asthma/broncho-constriction require an abbreviated Therapeutic Use Exemption.

Status on the prohibited list

Beta 2 Agonists comes under S3 on the list of substances and methods prohibited at all times (in and out of competition)

Side effects of the use of Beta-2 Agonists include:

- Palpitations
- Headaches
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Nervousness

Who might use them and why?

Beta-2-Agonists open up air passes and when given systemically (through the blood) have powerful anabolic effects. When they are given orally through tablets or by injection they have powerful stimulatory effects, of which are the increase of skeletal muscle mass and decrease of body fat.

Athletes requiring frequent or regular doses of inhaled β2-agonists should consider preventative measures and anti-inflammatory treatments to reduce the need for inhaled β-agonists. An abbreviated therapeutic use exemption is required for the use of inhaled beta-2-agonists.