

# TRAMADOL

Factsheet for Medical Professionals



From 1 January 2024, **tramadol** will be added to the Prohibited List. It will only be prohibited during the in-competition period.

**Tramadol** is used globally for the management of moderate to severe pain in adults. It is often provided in formulations with other medications such as paracetamol or acetaminophen. It is a centrally-acting synthetic analgesic with a dual mechanism of action, binding at  $\mu$ -opioid receptors and inhibiting noradrenaline and serotonin re-uptake. The dual mechanism of action may reduce the risk of opioid-associated adverse reactions. However, as it has opiate properties, there is still a risk for abuse and addiction.

**Tramadol** has been on the WADA monitoring list for 10 years. Monitoring data shows that **tramadol** is being used in certain sports including cycling, rugby and football.

As a medical professional, you need to be aware that **tramadol** will be prohibited in-competition as of 1 January 2024 and consider this when treating athletes. Athletes may not use the medication in-competition unless they have been granted a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). Note that if **tramadol** is given within the 24 hours leading up to the in-competition period, a sample collected during the in-competition period may result in a positive test.

## What is the in-competition period?

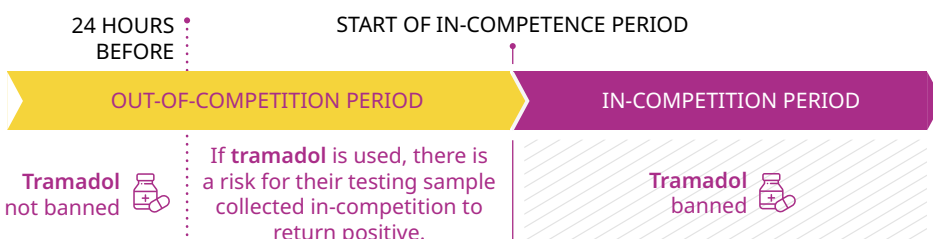


An in-competition sample may be collected from 11:59 PM on the day before the competition until the end of such competition and all related sample collection processes. However, the definition of in-competition is defined differently in a few sports. Athletes and their medical professionals are advised to confirm this with their International Federation (IF).

## Washout period



When treating athletes, medical professionals must be aware of the washout periods for **tramadol** to reduce the risk of an athlete testing positive. The washout period refers to the time from the last administered dose to the time of the start of the in-competition period.



## Tramadol usage and TUEs

If the athlete under your care requires treatment with **tramadol** during the in-competition period, the athlete must apply for a TUE.

If **tramadol** was used in the 24 hours prior to the in-competition period (i.e., during

the washout period), an in-competition sample may return a positive finding. In this scenario, the athlete can apply for a retroactive TUE. Medical professionals need to ensure that medical records are clear and contain all the information necessary to demonstrate the medical condition and need for the use of **tramadol** to support a TUE application.



**Important:** TUE applications must meet the criteria in the International Standard for TUEs in order to be granted. Athletes and their medical professionals must consider carefully whether a TUE is likely to be approved and 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.

Please see the [International Standard for TUEs \(ISTUE\)](#), the [Guidelines for ISTUEs](#), or the [TUE Physician Guidelines on Pain Management](#) for more details if required.

## What do Medical Professionals need to do?

- **Keep** your anti-doping knowledge up-to-date.
- **Review** the Prohibited List before prescribing or administering any substance
- **Speak** with your athletes to ensure they are aware of, and understand the change in status of **tramadol**
- **Be aware** that the washout period for **tramadol** is 24 hours to minimize the risk of a positive test.
- **Check** the competition and the IF rules to understand when the in-competition period starts
- **Decide** if **tramadol** is necessary and verify what the TUE application process is
- **Prepare** a medical file in advance, with sufficient diagnostic evidence in case a retroactive TUE is needed
- **Update** your knowledge about the Prohibited List and TUEs on ADEL