

Guidance on the use of over-the-counter and direct-to-consumer peptide products



'Peptide' products are increasingly marketed directly to consumers, including via the internet, for health, performance, or "wellness" purposes. Many of these products are not licensed medicines and have not been assessed to the standards normally required for human use.

Unlike conventional dietary or sports supplements which have a well-established research basis for their effectiveness (e.g. multivitamins, caffeine, creatine), peptides are relatively unproven biologically active amino acid chains that may exert direct - and often quite profound - pharmacological effects on human physiology.

While dietary supplements are generally intended to support normal nutrition and are not normally used to diagnose, treat, or modify disease processes, peptide products are often promoted for purposes such as extreme weight loss, significant physical or cognitive enhancement, rapid recovery, anti-ageing, or the treatment of medical conditions. As a result, the potential systemic effects, side effects, interactions, and aeromedical implications of peptide use may be significantly greater than those associated with routine nutritional supplementation.

Many peptide products lack robust data on safety, efficacy, dosing, and pharmacological effects, and their impact in the aviation environment is poorly characterised. In addition, products obtained outside regulated pharmaceutical pathways may not meet recognised manufacturing quality standards, raising concerns regarding contamination, sterility, product consistency, and labelling accuracy.

From an aeromedical perspective, the use of unlicensed or direct-to-consumer peptide products poses a significant hazard to an applicant's health, either through the effects of the substance itself or the underlying condition being treated. Pilots must not exercise licence privileges if a medical condition, treatment, or substance used may affect flight safety.

The use of peptide products obtained outside licensed and accepted clinical prescribing pathways is disqualifying for all classes of medical certification.