What are BCAAs?
BCAAs are three different essential amino acids, leucine, isoleucine, and valine, which your body can obtain from any complete protein source.

Why do people take them?
During exercise that lasts two hours or longer, glycogen becomes an important energy source and results in decreased levels of BCAA. Along with low BCAA levels, comes increased production of serotonin, which leads to feelings of sleepiness and fatigue. BCAA supplementation is thought to inhibit serotonin production, thereby delaying fatigue in endurance activities.

The Lowdown on BCAAs.
Research on BCAA supplementation has been mixed. There are a number of studies in trained and untrained subjects that have shown no effect of BCAA supplements on exercise performance or mental performance. However, in other studies, BCAA supplementation right before exercise has been shown to increase mental performance, improve cycling endurance, and reduce the time to complete a marathon. Also, BCAA supplementation for two weeks or more has been shown effective in improving time-trial performance in trained cyclists.

Sources.
BCAAs are amino acids and can be found in quality protein sources, like nuts, beef, poultry, dairy products, and more. The RDA of 3 g per day can be easily met from your diet.

Recommendations and Side Effects.
For the purposes of delaying fatigue in endurance exercise, 5 g of BCAAs per day is recommended. Higher intakes should be avoided due to the possibility of competitive inhibition of the absorption of other amino acids from the diet and the risk of gastrointestinal distress.

Brands and Prices.
Branched chain amino acids cost about fifty cents for five grams, so it will cost about $15 a month. NOW is a reputable brand to look for. Always check with your nutritionist before taking any new supplement.

Do Not Forget.
Supplements are not regulated by the FDA. Branched chain amino acids are not banned by the NCAA. No supplement can replace the benefits of a well-balanced diet.