



American Council for Drug Education, an affiliate of Phoenix House
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BASIC FACTS ABOUT DRUGS: STEROIDS

What are Steroids?

Steroids are manufactured testosterone-like drugs that are usually taken to build muscle, enhance performance, and improve appearance. While some steroids are used medically to treat many conditions including asthma, chronic lung disease, skin conditions and allergic reactions such as poison ivy, non medical use of steroids for cosmetic purposes can have serious side effects. Using steroids for cosmetic or athletic purposes is not sanctioned in the United States.

What are the street names?

Juice, Roids, Gym Candy, Pumpers, Stackers, Balls or Bulls, Weight Trainers, Arnies, A's or Anabolics

What Are Trade Names?

Anatrofin, Anaxvar, Annadrol, Bolasterone, Decadiabolin, Decadurabolin, Dehydropiandrosterone (BHEA), Delatestryl, Dianabol, Dihydrolone, Durabolin, Dymethazine, Enoltestovis, Equipose, Gamma Hydroxybutilate, Maxibolin, Methatriol, Methyltestosterone, Parabolin, Quinolone, Therabolin, and Winstrol to name a few.

How are they taken?

Swallowed in tablets or liquid; or injected. Users take them in patterns called "cycling", which means they take them over a specific period of time, stop, then start taking them again instead of continuously using them. Many users also take different types of steroids in combination with other drugs. This is known as "stacking".

Signs and Symptoms of Steroid Use

Steroid abusers often exhibit the following symptoms:

- Rapid weight gain
- Rapid muscle development
- Acne flare up
- Fluid retention
- Yellow tint in the eyes and on skin (jaundice)
- Mood swings, depression
- Aggressive behavior
- Premature balding

Drug Test Detection

Oral steroids can be found in your system up to several weeks after use. Injected steroids can be found for several months after use.

Short-term effects

Use of steroids can increase muscle mass, strength, and endurance, but can also cause liver tumors, jaundice, water retention, and high blood pressure. Some users show bad judgment because the drugs make them feel invincible. Other users suffer from uncontrolled aggression and violent behavior called "Roid rage," severe mood swings, manic episodes and depression. They often suffer from paranoid jealousy, extreme irritability and can have delusions.

Long-Term Effects

When the body experiences a build up of steroids in its system, conditions such as hypertension; high cholesterol; kidney disease, stunted growth; and heart damage are likely to occur. Women can experience irreversible deepening of the voice, shrinking of the breasts, menstrual irregularities, baldness and hair growth on other parts of the body, and genital swelling. Men can experience baldness, breast enlargement, sterility, shrinking of testicles and impotence. Steroids such as prednisone and other synthetic steroids, can cause a rise in blood sugar by blocking the effect of insulin. Over time, users can develop diabetes.