

## Effects Of Steroids

Anabolic steroid users are usually aware of the dangerous side effects of taking steroids. They ignore this knowledge because these side effects do not appear in the short-term, but occur after long-term use.

- Acne and jaundice
- Swelling of feet or ankles
- Bad breath
- High blood pressure
- Liver damage and cancer
- Aching joints
- Injury to tendons, ligaments, and muscles
- Insomnia and depression
- Suicide
- Euphoria or violent, angry rampages

**Males** who take anabolic steroids experience changes in sexual characteristics.

Although derived from testosterone, the drug can shutdown the reproductive system. Some possible side effects are:

- Shrinking of the testicles
- Reduced sperm count
- Impotence and baldness
- Difficulty or pain urinating
- Development of breasts
- Enlarged prostate

**Females** who take anabolic steroids develop traits, such as:

- Growth of facial hair
- Changes in or the stopping of the menstrual cycle
- Enlargement of the clitoris
- Deepening of the voice
- Reduction of the size of the breasts

Pre-teens and adolescents risk staying short and never reaching their full adult height.



## What Are Anabolic Steroids?

Anabolic-androgenic steroids are man-made substances related to male sex hormones. "Anabolic" refers to muscle building, and "androgenic" refers to increased masculine characteristics. Anabolic steroids are legally available only by prescription in the United States. Doctors use these drugs to treat delayed puberty, impotence, and body wasting in patient with AIDS and other diseases.

Anabolic steroids are designed to build muscle, reduce body fat, and improve sports performance. Athletes justify using them by saying they treat or prevent injury while building muscle mass.

Studies show steroid abuse is not confined to professional athletes. **Pennsylvania State University reported that 6.6 percent of 3,403 high school seniors, surveyed at 46 schools across the nation, had used steroids. Recent studies show youth as young as 11 and 12 years old experiment with steroids.** Reasons for abuse range from improving looks to competing in sports.

## How Are Anabolic Steroids Used?

Some anabolic steroids are taken orally as tablets or capsules, others are injected into muscles, and still others are provided as gels or creams that are rubbed into the skin. Doses taken by abusers can be 10 to 100 times greater than doses used for treating legitimate medical conditions.

Typically, abusers "stack" the drugs, meaning that they take two or more different anabolic steroids. Steroid abusers also "pyramid" their doses in cycles of 6 to 12 weeks. The user starts with low doses of the drug and slowly increases the doses. Abusers believe that pyramiding allows the body time to adjust to high doses and the drug-free cycle allows the hormonal system time to recover.

Some people only use steroids for a short time to get into shape or to build up muscles. Unfortunately, they quickly learn that when steroid use and training stop, muscles fade. Giving up steroids is difficult when a person's self-image depends on looks or athletic prowess.

# Anabolic Steroids