

## Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids are drugs that resemble the male sex hormone -- testosterone. You should be aware of these steroids and the dangers of their usage. Contrary to what some believe, they are not a shortcut to better performance and could lead to a literal dead end.

Steroids may be used by doctors to treat certain types of cancers, anemia, osteoporosis, and for males whose bodies do not produce enough hormones. Often people take steroids to improve appearance, build muscles, speed, or strength. Muscle size may be increased by steroid usage, but actual strength may not increase as this increase in size may only be from a buildup of body fluids. Under improper situations, steroids can hurt mental and physical health and hinder eventual long term success in athletics and life. Steroids cannot improve fitness, do not make injuries heal faster, and are not magic for a quick shortcut to strengthen muscles, increase speed and increase endurance. There are healthy choices of proper exercise and diet to improve performance that are much better physically, mentally, and psychologically.

Effects of Steroid Use • Steroids users may be unable to control emotions, especially frustration and anger causing them to feel and act more aggressively. Physical changes may also come about. In men, nipple and breast growth, shrunken testicles, enlarged prostate gland, impotence and sterility and even baldness can occur. In women breast shrinkage, enlarged clitoris, facial hair and baldness, a deepened voice, and menstrual problems may be caused by steroid usage. Both male and female users can experience severe acne and psychological problems that include depression, hallucinations, paranoia, severe mood swings and aggressive behavior. These problems could be more severe than the physical ones.

Long Term Risk • Long term steroid use can cause liver and kidney damage including cancer, cysts, jaundice, and impaired functions. Steroids may cause high blood pressure, increased cholesterol, heart disease and even death. Ligaments and tendons may become more susceptible to injury and take longer to heal. Pregnant women could harm their unborn children.

Other Risks • Other risks associated with steroid use include AIDS and other diseases from sharing needles, stomach and bone pains, diarrhea and other bowel and urinary problems, muscle cramps, nausea, and vomiting, unusual weight gain or loss, difficulty sleeping and constant headaches, gallstones and kidney stones.

Very little is known about steroid abuse. Controlled studies can be dangerous as some changes may be permanent making even small doses harmful. Steroid abusers often mix steroids, stacking or cycling them. The effects of this are not well known at this time. We do know that steroids use can be addictive.

Avoid the quick fix. Healthy training, with proper diet and adequate rest, will help build the strength, speed, and endurance needed. Steroids are banned in sports and using them is cheating. You could face severe penalties if you get caught. Contact reliable resources to learn about proper and ethical training. Most successful athletes are drug free.

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