



Tips for Teens: The Truth About Steroids

Slang--Arnolds, Gym Candy, Pumpers, Stackers, Weight Trainers, Juice

→ Get the Facts...

Steroids affect your heart. Steroid abuse has been associated with cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke. These heart problems can even happen to athletes under the age of 30.

Steroids affect your appearance. In both sexes, steroids can cause male-pattern baldness, cysts, acne, and oily hair and skin.

Steroids affect your mood. Steroids can make you angry and hostile for no reason. There are recorded cases of murder attributed to intense anger from steroid use.

Steroids increase your risk of infection. Sharing needles or using dirty needles to inject steroids puts you at risk for diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

Other slang terms associated with steroid use include:

- Roid rages--uncontrolled outbursts of anger, frustration, or combativeness that may result from using anabolic steroids.
- Shotgunning--taking steroids on an inconsistent basis.
- Stacking--using a combination of two or more anabolic steroids.

→ Before You Risk It...

Know the law. Steroids are illegal to possess without a prescription from a licensed physician. It is illegal for individuals to sell steroids.

Get the facts. Doctors prescribe steroids for specific medical conditions. They are only safe for use when a doctor monitors the person.

Know the risks. Illegal steroids are made overseas and smuggled into the United States or made in underground labs in this country. They pose greater health risks because they are not regulated by the government and may not be pure or labeled correctly.

Look around you. The majority of teens aren't using steroids. Among teenage males, where most steroid use is concentrated, past year use was reported by 2.2 percent of 8th graders, 3.6 percent of 10th graders, and 2.5 percent of 12th graders.¹

Know the Signs...

How can you tell if a friend is abusing steroids? Sometimes it's hard to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be abusing steroids:

For Guys:

- Baldness
- Development of breasts
- Impotence

For Girls:

- Growth of facial hair
- Deepened voice
- Breast reduction

For Both:

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin)
- Swelling of feet or ankles
- Aching joints
- Bad breath
- Mood swings
- Nervousness
- Trembling

What can you do to help someone who is abusing steroids? Be a real friend. You might even save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686.

Q&A

Q. Are steroids addictive?

A. Yes, they can be. Withdrawal symptoms include mood swings, suicidal thoughts and/or attempts, fatigue, restlessness, loss of appetite, and sleeplessness.²

Q. How long do steroids stay in your system?

A. The length of time that steroids stay in the body varies from a couple of weeks to more than 18 months.³

Q. What can I do to excel in sports if I don't use steroids?

A. Focus on getting proper diet, rest, and good overall mental and physical health. These things are all factors in how your body is shaped and conditioned. Excelling in sports is achievable and done by millions of athletes without relying on steroids.

Info

To learn more about steroids or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact:

SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
800-729-6686
linea gratis en español 877-767-8432
Web site: ncadi.samhsa.gov

Curious about the TV ads of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign? Check out the Web site at <http://www.freevibe.com> or visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site at <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>.

The bottom line: If you know someone who abuses steroids, urge him or her to get help. If you're abusing them--stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life.

It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

Do it today!

Footnotes

1. *Monitoring the Future Survey*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Press Release, *2000 Monitoring the Future Survey Released: Moderating Trend Among Teen Drug Use Continues*. December 14, 2000.
2. NIDA Research Reports. www.nida.nih.gov/ResearchReports/Steroids/anabolicsteroids4.aspx#addictive last accessed on December 18, 2000.
3. Anabolics.com. http://anabolics.com/_private/steroidtest.asp last accessed on December 18, 2000..