

Athletes and Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids may have a reputation for turning a wimp into a winner or a runt into a hulk, but the truth is that it takes a lot more to be a star athlete. Athletic prowess depends not only on strength and endurance, but on skill and mental acuity. It also depends on diet, rest, overall mental and physical health, and genes. Athletic excellence can be, and is achieved by millions without reliance on dangerous drugs.

If you or someone you know has a problem with steroids, talk to your health care provider or call the National Institute of Drug Abuse at 1(800)-662-HELP.

Steroid Use Glossary of Terms

- **blending**—mixing different drugs.
- **bulking up**—increasing muscle mass through steroids.
- **cycling**—taking multiple doses of steroids over a specified period of time, stopping for a time, starting again.
- **doping**—using drugs and other nonfood substances to improve athletic performance and prowess.
- **ergogenic drugs**—performance enhancing substances
- **megadosing**—taking massive amounts of steroids by injection or pill
- **plateauing**—when a drug becomes ineffective at a certain level
- **roid rages**—uncontrolled outbursts of anger, frustration, or combativeness that may result from using anabolic steroids
- **shotgunning**—taking steroids on a hit-or-miss basis
- **stacking**—using a combination of anabolic steroids, often in combination with other drugs
- **tapering**—slowly decreasing steroids intake

Sources:

1. National Clearinghouse on Alcohol and Drug Information, Research Report Series, National Institute of Drug Abuse, 1998.

<http://www.health.org/features>

2. Levinthal, C.F. (1996). *Drugs, Behavior, and Modern Society*. Chapter 14. Allyn & Bacon: MA.

To Contact Us

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Hours of Operation

Fall and Spring

(Effective mid August 2001)

8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, Urgent Care

Fall and Spring Pharmacy Hours

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday

Summer

(Mid May - Mid August)

7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday
7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Friday

After hours emergencies dial 911

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE
EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
GREENVILLE, NC 27858

Division of Student Life

Steroids



KNOW THE RISKS KNOW THE EFFECTS



What are Anabolic Steroids?

Anabolic steroids comprise one group of hormonal drugs that are known as ergogenic or so-called "performance-enhancing" drugs. Anabolic steroids are designed to mimic the body building traits of testosterone while minimizing its masculinizing effects. In certain cases, some anabolic steroids have therapeutic value. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of selected anabolic steroids for treating specific types of anemia, some breast cancers, osteoporosis, endometriosis, and hereditary angioedema, a rare disease causing swelling of some of the body parts. However, steroids have commonly been used and abused by athletes and non-athletes for their body-enhancing abilities.

What are the Primary Effects and What is Meant by "Anabolic"?

Testosterone-based steroids have two primary effects on the human body. The first is an androgenic effect, meaning a promotion of masculinizing changes in the body (i.e. body hair, body size, and genital changes). The second effect is anabolic, meaning the promotion of protein growth and muscular development. The goal of most steroid medications is to promote more anabolic effects and minimize androgenic effects, thus the term anabolic steroids.

What the Experts Say:

"There is little compelling scientific evidence to support the concept that steroids enhance athletic performance."

*-Theodore Cicero, Ph.D &
Lynn O' Connor, Ph.D.*

"Athletes would rather confess to cocaine use than to steroid use."

*-Dr. Charles E. Yesalis,
Penn State University*

THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF STEROIDS

MEN

Anabolic steroids disrupt the delicate balance of hormones in men. The use of anabolic steroids causes the testes gland to react to the increases in testosterone levels in the blood by producing less testosterone on its own. The testes gland gets an incorrect message that it is no longer needed (because of the disruption in the chemical balance). As a result, the testicles shrink and less sperm are produced which may lead to sterility. Because steroids eventually break down into estradiol (a female sex hormone), a male's breasts will enlarge. Other consequences for men may include:

- frequent, sustained and painful erections (priapism)
- impotence
- painful urination
- enlargement of the prostate gland
- severe acne (especially on back and upper arms)
- changes in hair growth patterns (facial hair growth is increased and balding on the head is accelerated)

WOMEN

Women commonly experience the following effects:

Not Reversible

lower voice
increased facial hair
enlarged clitoris
increased body hair
increased loss of scalp hair

Reversible

increased aggressiveness
diminished or stopped menstruation
increase in sex drive
increased acne

Women may also experience an increased appetite, decreased body fat, and a decrease in breast size. It is not known whether these effects are reversible.

FACT:

When the Russian weightlifting team, (thanks, in part, to steroids) walked off with a pile of medals at the 1952 Olympics, an American physician determined that U.S. competitors should have the same advantage. By 1958, a U. S. pharmaceutical firm had developed anabolic steroids, but the unwanted side effects were revealed too late to halt the spread of the drug into the sports world.

Other Health Risks

- Increased risk of liver tumors
- The research is unclear about the potential for increased risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart abnormalities.
- "Roid rage" or increased aggressiveness is commonly reported.
- If needles are shared, there is a significant risk of contracting Hepatitis or HIV.

Signs of Steroid Abuse

- Rapid increases in strength and/or size in a very short period of time (i.e. putting on 10 to 20 pounds of solid muscle within a period of a few weeks).
- Sudden increase in appetite and preoccupation with changes in one's physical condition.
- Recent appearance of acne, especially on the upper back, shoulders, and arms.
- Premature baldness.
- A puffy appearance in the face.
- Increased moodiness.
- Reddening of face, neck or upper chest
- A yellowing of skin and/or whites of the eyes due to disturbed liver functioning.
- Men may experience enlargement of the breasts and an increased interest in sex.
- Women may experience lowering vocal range and smaller, flatter breasts.