

## **ANABOLIC STEROIDS: Dangerous, Damaging & Potentially Deadly**

### What are Anabolic Steroids?

Anabolic steroids are chemical derivatives of the male hormone testosterone, which are being abused in order to increase muscle mass and strength. “Anabolic” means “to build”. When a person takes these illegal drugs, the body’s muscle tissue is stimulated to grow, producing larger and stronger muscles.

### How are Anabolic Steroids used?

Steroids can be taken in the following ways:

\*By mouth (pills)

\*Injected with a needle

- Can develop abscesses/infections at injection sites.
- Those who share needles are at risk for Hepatitis B and the AIDS virus.

\*Topical (rubbed into the skin)

### What are the possible side effects of Anabolic Steroid use?

Many changes take place inside the body and may not be noticed until it is too late. Some of the effects may go away when steroid use stops, but some may not.

*For both sexes:* high blood pressure & heart disease  
liver damage & cancers  
stroke & blood clots  
urinary & bowel problems (such as diarrhea)  
headaches, aching joints & muscle cramps  
nausea & vomiting  
sleep problems  
increased risk of ligament & tendon injuries  
severe acne, especially on face & back  
baldness  
stunting of growth in adolescents (even with small doses)

*For males:* reduced sperm count  
impotence  
increase in breast & nipple size  
enlarged prostate

*For females:* reduced breast size  
increase in facial & body hair  
deepened voice  
menstrual problems

*Emotional effects:* severe, aggressive behavior (“roid rage”)  
severe mood swings  
paranoia – extreme feelings of mistrust and fear  
hallucinations – seeing or hearing things that are not there  
anxiety and panic attacks  
depression and thoughts of suicide

### What are “natural steroids”/prohormones?

They are a class of substances that are classified as dietary supplements. Examples include androstenedione (“andro”) & dehydroepiandrosterone (“DHEA”). Manufacturers will claim these products are “safe steroids”, however, once ingested they breakdown into testosterone, therefore, they may be expected to produce the same side effects as anabolic steroids.