



Anabolic Steroids and Young Adults

What are anabolic steroids?

Anabolic steroids are drugs that are forms of the major male hormone testosterone and are known for their effects on muscle. They also have effects like growth of facial hair and deepening of the voice, as well as several unhealthy side effects like changes in behavior and in physical characteristics. For young women, some of the physical changes can be permanent.

Anabolic steroids are occasionally prescribed to help AIDS patients gain weight and to treat some types of severe anemia. These drugs are also used illegally by some athletes to improve performance, and by others to get a more muscular appearance.

Anabolic Steroids

- Anadrol (oxymetholone)
- Dianabol (methandrostenolone)
- Winstrol (stanozolol)
- Deca-Durabolin (nandrolone)
- Oxandrin (Oxandrolone)
- Depot-Testosterone

Anabolic steroids come in various forms including pills, creams, patches, tablet or drops placed under the tongue, and injectables. Veterinary steroids often contain the same components as human steroids, but are not as pure. People are sometimes using these as well.

Who is using anabolic steroids?

Both adults and children use anabolic steroids. In one study, use among youth has increased 16% among 10th graders and 37% among seniors in high school since 1996. A

recent survey reported that one of every 16 high school students has used anabolic steroids. Use among girls as well as boys is rising.

Steroid use by college athletes has increased in recent years as well, and some professional athletes continue to use these drugs. Anabolic steroids are also used by young people who are not athletes, but who take them to get a more muscular appearance.

Why care about anabolic steroids?

Anabolic steroids have dangerous physical and psychological side effects. These may be more dangerous in young adults because they can stop growth, and in females they can cause permanent changes in the voice and genitals.

After stopping these drugs, people can experience severe depression and moodiness.

Injections of anabolic steroids carry the risk for infection with AIDS or hepatitis if needles are shared. Anabolic steroids obtained without a prescription are unreliable and may contain additional substances, and may not even contain the steroids.

What can you do with this information?

If you are using anabolic steroids without a doctor's prescription, stop. You could be causing irreversible damage to your body. If you have used anabolic steroids and are experiencing health problems, see your doctor. If you are a parent, teacher or coach and know of kids who are using steroids, talk to them about the risks and counsel them on healthy nutrition and exercise alternatives.

Resources

Find-an-Endocrinologist:

www.hormone.org or call

1-800-HORMONE (1-800-467-6663)

Athletes Targeting Healthy Exercise and Nutrition Alternatives (ATHENA):

www.ohsu.edu/hpsm/athena.html

Athletes Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids (ATLAS):

www.ohsu.edu/hpsm/atlas.html

National Institute on Drug Abuse:

www.steroidabuse.org

United States Anti-Doping Agency:

www.usantidoping.org

Side Effects of Anabolic Steroid Use

For Girls:

- Facial hair
- Deep voice
- Increased body hair
- Irregular periods
- Increased appetite
- Enlarged clitoris

For Boys:

- Breasts
- Shrunk testicles

For Both:

- Severe acne
- Baldness
- Liver abnormalities and tumors
- Angry outbursts ("roid rage") or aggressive behavior
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations
- Psychosis
- Blood clots

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