

# THE FACTS ABOUT STEROIDS

## Facts

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

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

**Steroids increase risk of infection.** Sharing needles or using dirty needles to inject steroids creates a risk for diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

**Steroids are illegal to possess without a prescription.** Doctors prescribe steroids for specific medical conditions. They are only safe for use when a doctor monitors the patient.

**The majority of teens are not using steroids.** Among teenage males, who are most likely to use steroids, only 1.8 percent of 8th graders, 2.3 percent of 10th graders, and 3.2 percent of 12th graders reported steroid used in the past year.

## Signs

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

### *For Boys:*

- 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

## Questions and Answers

### **Q. Are steroids addictive?**

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

### **Q. How long do steroids stay in your system?**

A. The length of time that steroids stay in the body varies. Injected steroids may be detected in the body for 3 to 4 months while the oral types may remain for 1 to 4 weeks.

### **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 the body is shaped and conditioned. Excelling in sports is achievable and done by millions of athletes without relying on steroids.

### **Q. What are the slang terms related to steroids?**

A. Arnolds, Gym Candy, Pumpers, Stackers, Weight Trainers, Juice. 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.

To learn more about steroids, contact:  
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration  
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information  
800/729-6686 - TDD 800/487-4889  
linea gratis en español 877/767-8432  
[www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov)