

Drug Facts: **STEROIDS**

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

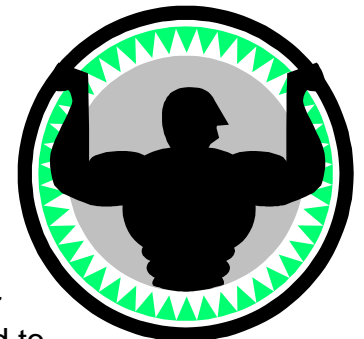


Anabolic steroids are a group of powerful compounds that are synthetic derivatives of the male sex hormone testosterone. These drugs are used illegally by body builders, long-distance runners, cyclists and various other athletes who claim steroids give them a competitive advantage and/or improve their physical performance. Taken in combination with a program of muscle-building exercise and diet, steroids may contribute to increases in body weight and muscular strength. Approximately 2% of teenagers will use steroids before they graduate from high school.

HEALTH HAZARDS

Irreversible side-effects. Steroid users are vulnerable to more than 70 physical and psychological side effects, many of which are irreversible. Steroid use most seriously injures the liver and cardiovascular and reproductive systems. In males, steroids can cause withered testicles, sterility, and hair loss. In females, steroids can lead to irreversible masculine traits such as breast reduction. Psychological effects in both sexes can include depression and an increase in aggressive behavior.

Long-term problems. While some side effects appear quickly, other potential health effects, such as heart attacks and strokes, may not occur for years. Steroid abuse in young adults can interfere with bone growth and lead to permanently stunted growth. People who inject steroids also risk contracting HIV and other blood-borne diseases from infected needles.



Information provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

www.theantidrug.com