

# tips for teens

## Steroids

### Q & A

**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.<sup>2</sup>

**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.<sup>3</sup>

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

### Info

To learn more about steroids or obtain referrals to programs in your community, contact one of the following toll-free numbers:

**SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information**  
800-729-6686  
TDD 800-487-4889

línea gratis en español  
877-767-8432



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

**The bottom line:** If you know someone who abuses steroids, urge him or her to get help. If you're abusing them—stop! The longer you ignore the real facts, the more chances you take with your life. It's never too late. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust.

**Do it today!**

Curious about the TV ads of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign? Check out the Web site at [www.freevibe.com](http://www.freevibe.com) or visit the Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site at [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov).



## The Truth About Steroids

**Slang—Arnolds, Gym Candy, Pumpers, Stackers, Weight Trainers, Juice**

### Get the Facts...

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

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

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

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.

### Before You Risk It...

**Know the law.** Steroids are illegal to possess without a prescription from a licensed physician. It is illegal for individuals to sell steroids.

**Get the facts.** Doctors prescribe steroids for specific medical conditions. They are only safe for use when a doctor monitors the person.

**Know the risks.** Illegal steroids are made overseas and smuggled into the United States or made in

underground labs in this country. They pose greater health risks because they are not regulated by the government and may not be pure or labeled correctly.

**Look around you.** The majority of teens aren't using steroids. Among teenage males, who are most likely to use steroids, only 1.3 percent of 8th graders, 2.3 percent of 10th graders, and 3.3 percent of 12th graders reported steroid use in the past year.<sup>1</sup>

### Know the Signs...

#### How can you tell if a friend is abusing steroids?

Sometimes it's hard to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following warning signs, he or she may be abusing steroids:

#### For Guys:

- 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

**What can you do to help someone who is abusing steroids?** Be a real friend. Save a life. Encourage your friend to stop or seek professional help. For information and referrals, call the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 800-729-6686.

**For more information, or for references to facts found in this *Tips for Teens*, go to [www.ncadi.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncadi.samhsa.gov).**