



# ANABOLIC STEROIDS

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## LET'S GET THE FACTS RIGHT

**ARE YOU USING STEROIDS OR THINKING ABOUT IT?**  
Here are some facts *you* should know

### What are anabolic steroids?

Anabolic steroids are drugs which are derived from testosterone, which is a male hormone. Some are in tablet form and others are injected into muscle. Some names of **anabolic steroids** are:

- Andriol
- Halotestin
- Proviron
- Sustanon
- Primobolan
- Deca-Durabolin

When you buy steroids from a gym or a dealer, you may actually be getting something totally different. They may be drugs produced for use on animals or they may be fake or labelled incorrectly.

Some names of steroids which are **made for use on animals** are:

- Stanozolol
- Boldebal-H
- Nandrabolin
- Spectriol
- Drive
- Stanabolic

Anabolic steroids are very different from steroids (corticosteroids) such as prednisone, which is used to treat asthma. **This pamphlet does not refer to the steroids used in asthma treatment.**

### Are anabolic steroids safe?

**NO.** There are risks in using anabolic steroids in both injectable or tablet form. Most anabolic steroid tablets present definite risks of permanent liver damage and liver cancer.

It is not safe to share needles with any drug. If you inject anabolic steroids and share needles, you are at risk of getting blood transmitted infections such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV/AIDS.

While it is true that many of the risks and side effects associated with using anabolic steroids have been exaggerated by some health professionals, sporting bodies, the media and handbooks, not all steroids will cause the same side effects.

Different drugs cause different side effects at different doses. However, every time you use another steroid, increase the steroid dose and the longer you use steroids, the more chance you have of getting more side effects.

**AT BEST YOU MAY BE RIPPED OFF,  
AT WORST YOU COULD END UP  
TAKING SOMETHING HARMFUL  
OR CONTAMINATED.**

## Is there a safe dosage for anabolic steroids?

There is no 'safe' dose of an anabolic steroid. If you continue to use steroids, despite health warnings and your doctors advice, however, keep the dose to an absolute minimum and take breaks from using the steroids.

## Do anabolic steroids work?

The answer to this is controversial. If you speak to athletes, body builders, trainers and some doctors, who have used or had experiences with anabolic steroids, they are certain that anabolic steroids increase lean muscle mass, strength and endurance. But scientific studies have only shown that anabolic steroids enhance physical performance through the effect of training, diet and motivation, which accompany the use of the drugs.

## Will anabolic steroids work better if I use more?

**NO.** Don't believe everything you read in handbooks and magazines – they will tell you about ways of using anabolic steroids through complicated 'scientific' explanations, which are often not based on science at all. Higher doses don't have much more of an effect than lower doses because the anabolic steroid receptor

sites in muscle become saturated. There is really no point in taking extra anabolic steroids when they have no extra effects on your build – and can certainly cause more side effects.

## Are anabolic steroids used for medical reasons?

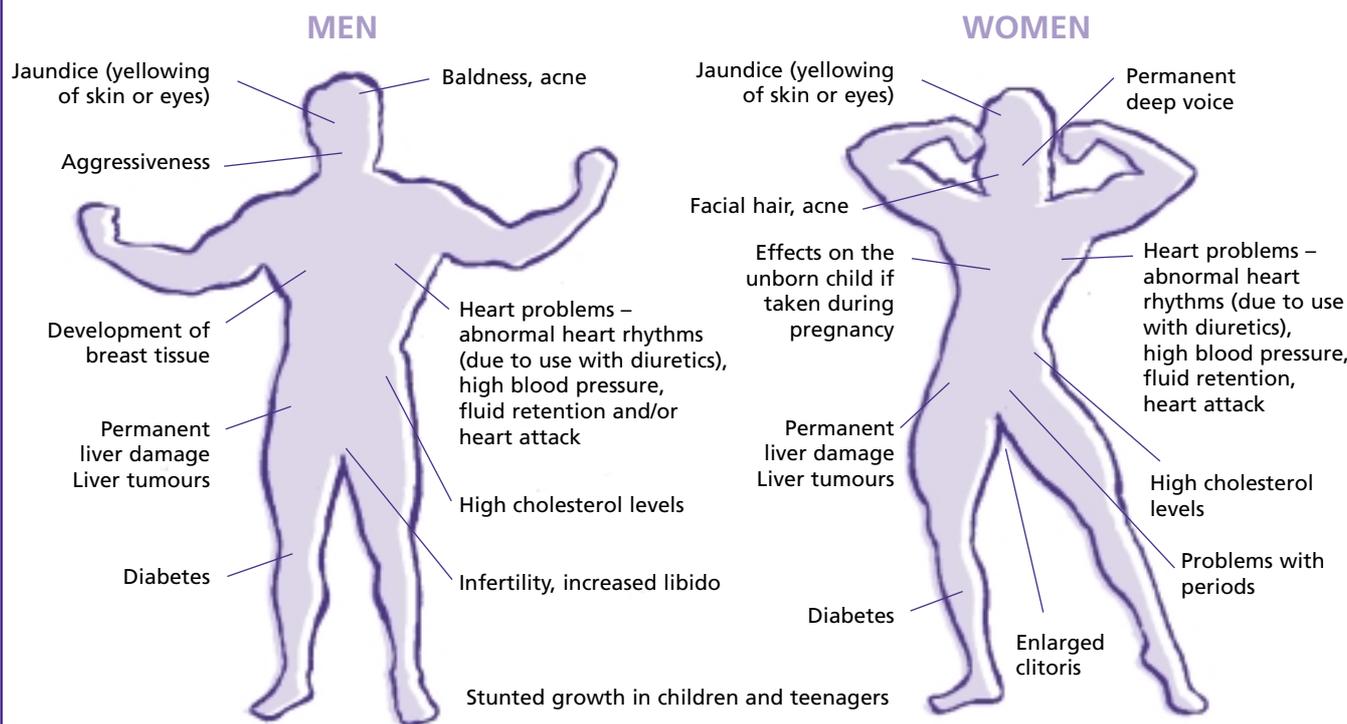
**YES.** Anabolic steroids are used to treat certain hormonal problems, where there is a deficiency of natural male hormones. They are also being trialled in the treatment of weight loss caused by HIV/AIDS infection. Anabolic steroids are used to treat some cancers, osteoporosis and some rare conditions. Even when anabolic steroids are used for medical purposes, they are only used when other drugs have not worked. Body building or improvement to sporting performance are not medical reasons for using anabolic steroids.

## Should I tell my doctor if I use anabolic steroids?

**YES.** Your doctor may discover early side effects from using anabolic steroids, which you may not have noticed. They can also give you advice on how to decrease the side effects.

## POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT ANABOLIC STEROIDS

Here is a list of some side effects which may be caused by anabolic steroids.  
Most side effects normally stop – if you stop using the drugs.



## Why can't my doctor prescribe steroids for me?

It is **illegal** for your doctor to prescribe anabolic steroids, unless they are to be used for medical reasons. A few people have suggested that doctors should prescribe anabolic steroids so that steroid users can be 'monitored'. Very few experts agree with this. This is because there is no safe way of 'monitoring' the use of steroids. Also, long-term effects of using anabolic steroids are unknown. There is no 'safe' dose, so a doctor cannot safely prescribe anabolic steroids for non-medical reasons.

## Can I become 'addicted' to anabolic steroids?

You may become psychologically dependent on anabolic steroids. If this happens you may crave the steroids and find it very difficult to stop using them, even though you know they are affecting your health.

You cannot become physically 'addicted' to anabolic steroids, as you might with alcohol or heroin.

## What other psychological effects can anabolic steroid users experience?

Anabolic steroid users often say that they experience a feeling of euphoria (feeling high) or improved self-esteem (feeling better about themselves). Others say they have mood swings, violent or aggressive behaviour ('roid rages'), become paranoid or depressed. As only a limited amount of research has been done in this area, it is difficult to be certain whether a particular anabolic steroid user will get any or all of these side effects. If you think you are experiencing any of these side effects, you should discuss them with your doctor.

## Am I safe from anabolic steroid side effects if I have regular blood tests to check my liver?

**NO.** There is no definite way of 'monitoring' that anabolic steroids are not causing side effects on the liver. A normal blood test does not necessarily mean that your liver is normal.

**IF YOU DO INJECT ANABOLIC STEROIDS, DON'T SHARE NEEDLES AND USE A STERILE NEEDLE EVERY TIME.**

## Is it safe to use HCG, diuretics, tamoxifen and other drugs to treat side effects?

**NO.** Generally, it is not safe to use other drugs to treat side effects. Depending on the drug, they can cause as many problems as anabolic steroids themselves. It is particularly dangerous to use diuretics (drugs which reduce fluid retention) with anabolic steroids. They may cause abnormal heart rhythms which may lead to death. This is because diuretics can suddenly and markedly change the quantity of sodium and potassium in cells in the body, which can be very dangerous for blood cells, the heart muscle and brain tissue.

HCG does not correct any medical problems caused by steroids, and using tamoxifen to 'treat' breast enlargement has its dangers too. In most cases, breast enlargement will stop, if you stop using the drug. If not, breast enlargement may need to be corrected by surgery.

**THE BEST WAY TO BE SAFE IS NOT TO USE ANABOLIC STEROIDS AT ALL. IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE STEROIDS THERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE THE HARM YOU WILL EXPERIENCE.**

## If I am using anabolic steroids, how can I decrease side effects?

**Obviously, the best way to be safe is not to use anabolic steroids at all.**

But if you are using anabolic steroids you should:

- use low doses
- don't share needles or syringes with other people
- use a clean needle from an unopened package with every injection and make sure the injection site is sterile
- avoid using diuretics with anabolic steroids
- avoid using other drugs to 'treat' side effects if they develop and avoid using steroids altogether
- let your doctor know that you are using anabolic steroids and talk about it
- make sure you know exactly what tablets you are taking. If you are not sure what they are, then find out before you take them. Also make sure that any tablet you take has not been tampered with.

## Is it illegal to use and possess anabolic steroids for non-medical purposes in NSW?

**YES.** If you are found to possess, supply or administer anabolic steroids to another person it is an offence under the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966*. Penalties for breach of this *Act* include fines and/or imprisonment.

## Is the use of anabolic steroids and other performance enhancing substances banned in competitive sport?

**YES.** In competitive sport, the International Olympic Committee prohibits the use of anabolic steroids for performance enhancement. Most individual sporting bodies will stop athletes from competing if they are found to have used anabolic steroids.

**BE INFORMED, BE AWARE,  
BE SENSIBLE, BE SAFE.**

## Where can I get advice on which drugs are banned in sport?

The independent Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) can provide you with information about banned drugs. ASDA was established in 1991 and its major functions include implementing education programs aimed at both the sporting and general community, establishing a comprehensive drug testing program and assisting the sporting community on drugs in sport policy issues.

ASDA maintains a service for sports people to provide up-to-date and accurate advice on which drugs are banned in sport. The **ASDA** can be contacted Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5.00pm on **Tel. (02) 6206 0200**.

[www.asda.org.au](http://www.asda.org.au)

## Is there anyone that I can talk to about anabolic steroids?

**YES.** It is a good idea to discuss your anabolic steroid use with your doctor. Your doctor can help you stop using anabolic steroids and tell you how to try to get as few side effects as possible, if you are using them.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANABOLIC STEROIDS

### Where can NSW residents get more information?

If you want to talk to someone by telephone, you can phone the anonymous hotline **ADIS (Alcohol and Drug Information Service)** on: **Tel. (02) 9361 8070**.

**ADIS Hotline 1800 764 397**

### For more copies of this pamphlet

Contact the NSW Health Better Health Centre, Publication Warehouse on Tel. (02) 9816 0452.

Download a copy of this pamphlet from the NSW HealthWeb site: **[www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)**

### Useful websites and links

NSW Health Web site  
**[www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)**

Australian Sports Drug Agency  
**[www.asda.org.au](http://www.asda.org.au)**