Steroids

Understanding the dangers of one of America’s fastest growing drugs among adolescents

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What are steroids?

- Androgenic Anabolic Steroids
- Synthetically produced testosterone
- Medical names: Durabolin, Equipoise, Winstrol and Clenbuterol
- Street Names: Gym candy, roids, pumpers, juice, stackers, and Arnold’s

Why do people abuse steroids?

- To improve physical performance
- To gain a competitive edge
- To become stronger
- To improve self-esteem
- To lose weight, burn fat and increase muscle
- Vanity

Where do you get steroids?

- Smuggling in from other countries
- Stolen from legitimate sources
- Vets, inappropriate prescriptions
- Produced in labs

How are steroids taken?

Most common ways:
- Injection, pills, pellet under the skin and patches
- “Stacking” – Taking more than one type of steroid at a time
- “Cycling” – traditionally 6 to 12 weeks
- Dosage depends on the needs of the sport
- Generally, athletes will build to a peak and intake and then taper back down
Dangers of abusing steroids

**Physical:**
- Cardiovascular problems
- Liver problems
- Risk of contracting HIV
- Stunted growth
- Severe acne
- Sex-specific:
  - Males: atrophy of testicles, breast enlargement, sterility
  - Females: masculinizing effects, menstrual irregularities, infertility

Psychological:
- Increased aggressiveness
- More likely to use other illegal drugs
- Sleep disturbances
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Depression
- Suicide

Decreasing adolescent use of steroids

- Most interventions have been counterproductive. Why?
- Scare tactics
- Successful programs:
  - ATLAS, ATHENA and STUDS
  - The social-psychological approach
- Role of the school psychologist

Statistics

- Highest adolescent user group consists of high school football players
- Abuse starts as early as the 7th grade
- Teenage girls are the fastest-growing user group
- Up to 12% of high school athletes use steroids at some point
- Since 1991, steroid abuse has doubled among teenagers

Today in America...

1 million kids are using steroids
References???