

# FACTS ABOUT STEROIDS

## WHAT ARE STEROIDS?

Also known as roids, arnolds, andro, arnies, a's, balls, bulls, caseys, gear, gym candy, juice, pumpers, stackers, steroids, vets' drugs, weight trainers, weight gainers. Often known as performance and image enhancing drugs, anabolic steroids are synthetic drugs that imitate male sex hormones (testosterone), and are used to grow and repair muscle tissue.

Use can be legal or illegal. They are used illegally to improve strength and body image, often towards achieving success in sports, athletics or image-based careers. They are also used legally for medical purposes to treat hormonal issues such as delays in puberty or muscle loss due to disease. Anabolic steroids come in the form of tablets, capsules, liquids, gel or cream. Depending on type, they can be injected, swallowed or applied to the skin.

## EFFECTS OF STEROIDS

Effects depend on the person (age, weight, size, health and tolerance), as well as the frequency of use, the amount of use, and if it is used with other drugs, including alcohol.

Short-term effects, both desired and undesired, may include...

- increase in muscle size and strength – train more often for longer, with improved recovery
- fluid retention (bloating)
- irritability, mood swings, aggression or depression
- increased sex drive
- skin changes – acne, stretch marks, prematurely aged
- more infections (colds and flus)
- high blood pressure, urinary tract infections, difficulty sleeping, increased cholesterol

- men: erectile and prostate problems, reduced sperm count, baldness, testicle and penis shrinkage, involuntary and long-lasting erection, breast development
- women: irregular or loss of periods, decreased breast size, deepened voice, facial and body hair growth, enlarged clitoris, infertility
- tetanus, infection, vein and nerve damage, Hepatitis B or C, HIV, AIDS (from injecting or sharing needles).

Long-term effects may include...

- depression, violence, paranoia, psychosis
- heart attack, stroke, kidney or prostate cancer, liver and kidney damage, death
- psychological dependence.

## HOW LONG DO STEROIDS STAY IN YOUR SYSTEM?

Depends on use and person. It can be detected in urine for 14 to 28 days after last dose. It can take up to 4 months to restore natural testosterone levels after being on anabolic steroids for a long time.

## TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

There is no safe way to use MDMA. There will always be a health risk. The only way to be safe is not to use. If you choose to use, the following will help reduce risk:

**Before:** take a friend and tell them what you plan on taking, plan how to get home (to avoid driving under the influence), use new or clean equipment. Injecting is not recommended, though if choosing to inject, get your own clean, sharp syringe and find a clean location.

**During:** go slow, start with a low dose then wait two hours to see effects before having a bit more, know and keep to your limits, take regular breaks from dancing to cool down and drink some water (not too much). Safely dispose of syringes.

Avoid: taking a high dose (can cause unpleasant, overwhelming experience in large doses), using MDMA with other drugs, including alcohol, using too often, needle or equipment sharing. While using don't be alone, don't drive or do risky activities or be responsible for the care of others.

## IS STEROID USE BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

- I struggle to limit or reduce the amounts of steroids I'm using
- I'm experiencing a lot of negative effects
- I have developed a tolerance to steroids, so I need to use more to gain effects
- I have withdrawal symptoms – fatigue, weight loss, decreased strength, depression.

## TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC STEROID USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with using steroids
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve using steroids
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

## STEROIDS AND THE LAW

It is illegal to use or possess steroids without a doctor's prescription or to sell or give anabolic steroids to someone else. Anabolic steroids are banned in competitive sport. In Queensland, it is illegal to possess needles or syringes if they are not disposed of safely and therefore pose a risk to others.

### FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL [INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU](mailto:INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU). FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL [INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU](mailto:INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU).

### FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE: 1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).