

What are anabolic steroids?

Anabolic-androgenic steroids are man-made substances related to male sex hormones. “Anabolic” refers to muscle-building, and “androgenic” refers to increased masculine characteristics. “Steroids” refers to the class of drugs. These drugs are available legally only by prescription, to treat conditions that occur when the body produces abnormally low amounts of testosterone, such as delayed puberty and some types of impotence. They are also prescribed to treat body wasting in patients with AIDS and other diseases that result in loss of lean muscle mass. Abuse of anabolic steroids, however, can lead to serious health problems, some irreversible.

Today, athletes and others abuse anabolic steroids to enhance performance and also to improve physical appearance. Anabolic steroids are taken orally or injected, typically in cycles of weeks or months (referred to as “cycling”), rather than continuously. Cycling involves taking multiple doses of steroids over a specific period of time, stopping for a period, and starting again. In addition, users often combine several different types of steroids to maximize their effectiveness while minimizing negative effects (referred to as “stacking”).

What are Prohormones and Designer Steroids?

The number of available prescription anabolic steroids has not changed since the late 1960's. However, since 1997 many new AAS have been released into circulation as nutritional supplements. They are commonly known as prohormones and designer steroids. The term Prohormone has been used during the last decade to designate a substance (dietary supplement), which readily converts in the body into an illegal anabolic steroid. The most common prohormones are precursors of such anabolic steroids as testosterone, nandrolone (19-nortestosterone) and boldenone (1-dehydrotestosterone). These prohormones are now specifically banned and are included as an amendment to the Controlled Substances Act of January 2005.

Source NIDA



The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is part of the [National Institute of Health \(NIH\)](#), a component of the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).