



TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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Shirley J. Neeley, Ed.D.
Commissioner

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Today we are asking you to join us in fighting a recently noted problem, the dangerous and illegal abuse of performance enhancing steroids. While the majority of scrutiny has focused on abuse by professional athletes, we are very concerned with abuse of these drugs by schoolchildren. According to a 2003 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Survey, seven percent of ninth graders have taken steroids without a doctor's prescription. This is a troubling statistic, so we are asking your help to keep children safe from these harmful drugs.

In order to raise awareness of the ill effects of steroids, we have enclosed a fact sheet to post or distribute to students and parents. The facts enclosed speak for themselves, and students need to know that these drugs are not a quick answer for better performance. Moreover, any gains made as a result of steroid use quickly disappear when use is stopped, while damage done to organs, joints and the rest of the body may be permanent. Millions of athletes have focused on proper diet, exercise and rest and have excelled without their use.

Please get this information to your students, parents and faculty, and reinforce it at every opportunity. We thank you for your assistance in combating this harmful trend and look forward to a safe and healthy year of academic and athletic excellence.

Sincerely,

Shirley J. Neeley, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

Eduardo J. Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner of Health

"Good, Better, Best—never let it rest—until your good is better—and your better is BEST!"

THE FACTS ABOUT STEROIDS

Facts

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

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

Steroids increase risk of infection. Sharing needles or using dirty needles to inject steroids creates a risk for diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

Steroids are illegal to possess without a prescription. Doctors prescribe steroids for specific medical conditions. They are only safe for use when a doctor monitors the patient.

The majority of teens are not using steroids. Among teenage males, who are most likely to use steroids, only 1.8 percent of 8th graders, 2.3 percent of 10th graders, and 3.2 percent of 12th graders reported steroid use in the past year.

Signs

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

For Boys:

- 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

Questions and Answers

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.

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.

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

Q. What are the slang terms related to steroids?

A. Arnolds, Gym Candy, Pumpers, Stackers, Weight Trainers, Juice. 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.

To learn more about steroids, contact:
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
800/729-6686 - TDD 800/487-4889
linea gratis en español 877/767-8432
www.ncadi.samhsa.gov