

- The term “anabolic steroids” refers to synthetic testosterone. Anabolic steroids can be legally prescribed to treat conditions resulting from steroid hormone deficiency, such as delayed puberty, as well as diseases that result in loss of lean muscle mass, such as cancer and AIDS. But some athletes, bodybuilders, and others abuse these drugs in an attempt to enhance performance and/or improve their physical appearance.
- **Street Names:** Roids, Juice, Gym Candy, Pumpers
- **Uses:** Steroids could be injected, taken orally, or applied as an ointment. Steroids are usually taken intermittently to avoid a change in hormonal responses from the body. This method of intermittent steroid use, referred to as “cycling”, is typically done over weeks or months, stopped, and then started again. Another method of use commonly seen is done by combining steroid and non-steroidal supplements, in an attempt to maximize effectiveness. This practice is referred to as “stacking”.
- **Physical Effects:** Users of steroids experience two different types of effects – androgenic and anabolic. Androgenic effects refer to the increase in masculine features. These include deepening of the voice and increased facial hair, among others. Anabolic effects refer to the performance changes in the body; these include increases in muscle mass, growth of various internal organs, and increase of calcium in the bones.
- **Psychological Effects:** Users of steroids commonly exhibit mood swings, often going from calm to enraged in a matter of second. These mood swings are commonly referred to as “roid rage”. Although the most common mood reported is increased aggressiveness, the mood swings could also result in depression, paranoia, and jealousy.
- **Health Consequences:** The different genders exhibit different health effects while using steroids. For males, the effects can include: shrunken testis, lowered sperm count, infertility, baldness, and development of male breasts, along with an increased risk for developing prostate cancer. Females also have gender specific effects including: increased facial hair, male-pattern baldness, changes in menstrual cycle, enlargement of the clitoris, and deepened voice. In the short-term, both genders exhibit an array of effects. These range from acne, headache, fluid retention, oily skin, yellowing of the eyes, and possible infection at the injection site. Long-term consequences are also a large concern for both genders. These effects can lead to fatality in severe cases. The effects include liver damage, kidney damage or failure, high blood pressure, enlargement of the heart, and changes in blood cholesterol. These effects also increase the risk for stroke and heart attack, even in young people.
- **Withdrawal Effects:** When a user stops abusing steroids, several withdrawal effects can be seen. These effects include mood swings, fatigue, loss of appetite, insomnia, lowered sex drive, restlessness, and even extreme depression.