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9 POINTS TO PONDER ABOUT ANABOLIC DRUGS

Anabolic steroids play a conspicuous role in our society today. Since the early 1950s, anabolic steroids have been increasingly used by athletes, in general, and body builders in specific. The modern form of bodybuilding will not be where it is today without the use of steroids.

Studies show that with the passage of time anabolic steroids can take a heavy toll on a person's health. Abuse of certain anabolic steroids can cause major health problems such as heart attacks and strokes, severe liver problems including hepatic cancer, etc. Furthermore, steroids abuse can cause unnatural body changes. For example, men may develop large breasts and women's bodies may develop masculinity.

In the past, bodybuilders who were very serious about bodybuilding mainly used anabolic steroids. However, today things are different. Anabolic steroids are being used more and more in all sports including football, baseball, hockey, soccer, wrestling, track and field, cycling and swimming, just to name a few.

Perhaps the biggest problem associated with anabolic steroids, is the abusing use by teenagers esp. in high schools. In a competitive environment, these teenagers will do anything to rise above the rest, and be the center of attention.

These teenagers will try to acquire anabolic drugs without having any prior knowledge about them. Because counterfeits are such a big problem, most of them are probably taking fake (useless) steroids. If they do get legit anabolic steroids, they more than likely don't know how to use it, and are following the directions from their supplier. The supplier will obviously tell the naive individual to take high dosages, resulting in more sales for the supplier. In any case, anabolic steroids should not be considered, if under the age of 18 years old.

In order to get a better understanding of them, we have compiled the following brief ponderable points regarding the anabolic steroids. The reader should be able to acquire essential knowledge about anabolic steroids without leaving this website:

1. **Definition:** Anabolic steroids are synthetic substances related to the male sex hormones (androgens). They promote growth of skeletal muscle (anabolic effect) and the development of male sexual characteristics (androgenic effects), and also have other effects.
2. **Legality:** Under a 1988 US legislation, amending the food and drugs act, criminal penalties have been set forth for the trafficking of anabolic drugs for non-medical uses. They are currently reckoned as controlled substances and are required to be prescribed and dispensed by licensed physicians. In the recent past, the US congress has held hearings so as to amend the Controlled Substances Act to include anabolic steroids along with more serious drugs like cocaine and heroin
3. **Description:** Anabolic steroids come in different shapes, forms, sizes, and colors. There are more fakes/counterfeit steroids on the market than there are legitimate/real steroids. Fakes are sold because they are cheap to make and easy to sell. The following are the forms in which these steroids are available in the market:
 - a. **Pill Form:** These steroids are taken "orally", meaning by mouth.
 - b. **Ampule Form:** An ampule is a sealed glass container with the steroid inside. The top is cut off, and the liquid is withdrawn with a needle.
 - c. **Vial Form:** A vial is similar to an ampule, except it has a rubber top.
 - d. **Bottle Form:** Bottles are similar to vials, only larger versions.
4. **In-take:** The following are a few ways the Anabolic steroids are taken:
 - a. Orally as tablets or capsules.

- b. By ointment preparations rubbed into the skin.
 - c. Injecting the steroid is the way most users go.
 - d. In combination, a practice called "stacking". Abusers frequently take two or more anabolic steroids together, mixing oral and/or inject-able types, sometimes adding drugs such as stimulants or painkillers.
 - e. In cyclic dosage, a process called "pyramiding". The cycle starts with low dosages that are gradually increased. In the second half, the doses are slowly decreased to zero. The abusers perceive that pyramiding allows the body time to adjust to high doses and body's hormonal system to recuperate.
5. Uses: Anabolic Steroids are used by various people, including physicians, around the world for the following purposes:
 - a. Treatment of delayed puberty and impotence.
 - b. Treatment of body wasting in AIDS patients and other diseases.
 - c. Individuals that simply want to change the way they look.
 - d. In professions which require above average strength, for example, army, police officers, bouncers, etc.
6. Abuses: Steroid Abuse is simply to be used by people who really don't need them. The following can be taken as the possible abuses of anabolic steroids:
 - a. Mostly by body builders to develop huge muscles in short time.
 - b. People who are disappointed with their bodies, either fat or skinny, and want to look different.
 - c. By athletes looking to gain excessive muscle mass.
 - d. By ordinary people who are motivated by a desire to prevent recurrence of physical or sexual attacks they have experienced.
7. Side Effects & Health Issues: Below are only some of the side effects and health issues associated with steroid use. Some steroids lead to more side effects than others:
 - a. Water Retention: This is most common from using steroids. It is a "puffiness" or swelling in the neck and facial areas.
 - b. Acne: It is also a very common side effect, it can give acne to someone who has never had acne, and it can make acne worse for others.
 - c. Gynecomastia: It is the formation of breasts, or abnormally large glands usually among the men. This phenomenon has proven to be irreversible.
 - d. Hypertension: High blood pressure is also a chance when taking steroids
 - e. Cardiovascular Disease: Studies have shown that steroid use is a risk factor for heart disease.
 - f. Palpitations: Heart palpitations have been reported by a number of athletes on steroids.
 - g. Impotence: Impotence occurs when a user goes on and off steroids. When steroids are first used sexual interest increases because of the heightened frequency and duration of the erections. But eventually the opposite happens and no erections can be produced.
 - h. Jaundice: A serious liver disease that is found by an enlarged painful liver, yellowing of the eyes and skin, and flu like symptoms. This happens when athletes use high dosages of steroids.
 - i. Boys & Men: Reduced Sperm count, shrinking of testicles, difficulty or pain in urinating, baldness, etc.
 - j. Girls & Women: Development of more masculine characteristics, such as decreased body fat and breast size, deepening of voice, excessive growth of body hair, and loss of scalp hair, as well as clitoral enlargement.
 - k. Premature termination of the adolescent growth spurt in both males and females. They remain shorter than they would have been without the drug abuse.
 - l. Anabolic steroids used in high doses promote aggression that can manifest itself in fighting, sexual abuse, armed robbery, burglary, vandalism, etc.
 - m. Abandoning the usage of such steroids can cause symptoms of depressed mood, fatigue, restlessness, loss of appetite, insomnia, reduced sex drive, headache, muscle and joint pain, and the desire to take more anabolic steroids.
8. Available Drugs: A few of the steroids that are available in the market are:
 - a. Anadrol, Oxandrin, Anavar, Dianabol (capsule/tablet form).
 - b. Durabolin, Depo-Testosterone, Equipoise, Sustanon (injection form).
9. Remedial Steps:
 - a. Present a balanced picture of what these drugs can do for and to the users.
 - b. To educate about the possible penalties for possessing anabolic drugs illegally.
 - c. Enlist alternative habits to in order to achieve the same goals as with the steroids. Most of

these goals, like building nice bodies, acquiring extra strength, can be achieved to reasonable extent without the usage of steroids and with alternative healthier trainings and techniques.

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