

Are steroids worth the risk?

Dominic has baseball on the brain. He wants to be the best and dreams of playing in the majors someday, but worries about the intense competition for a position on a major league team. His girlfriend, Deborah, is also a highly competitive athlete whose appearance and performance are very important to her. She wants to stand out — both physically and athletically.

Because of the pressure they each feel to excel, Dominic and Deborah wonder whether steroids would help them. They've heard rumours about the bad side effects of steroids but they don't have many facts. Here's the scoop on steroids.

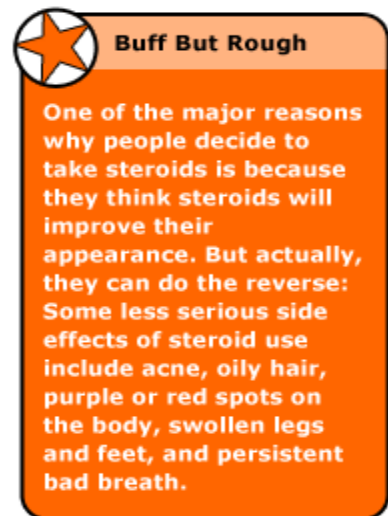
What Are Steroids?

The body produces steroids naturally to support such functions as fighting stress and promoting growth and development. The steroid products seek to imitate their natural counterparts. A commonly-quoted use of steroids is to sports performance or physical looks.

There are two distinct groups of steroids: **anabolic steroids** and **steroidal supplements**.

Anabolic steroids stimulate muscle tissue to grow and "bulk up" in response to training by mimicking the effect of naturally produced testosterone on the body.

Steroidal supplements may cause effects similar to the body's growth hormones but this claim is not proven. In fact, the majority of them require a prescription to be administered.



Everyone is at risk

Specific Risks for Guys

- shrinkage of private parts
- pain when urinating
- breast development
- impotence and sterility

Specific Risks for Girls

- increased facial hair growth
- develop masculine traits
- loss of feminine body characteristics
- menstrual cycle changes

Adapted from:

Dowshen S. (2009), *Are steroids worth the risk?* [Online] Available: www.kidshealth.org (03 Oct 2012)