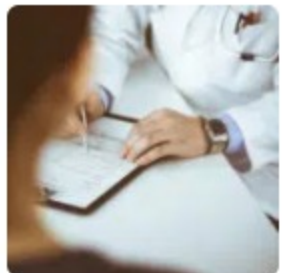


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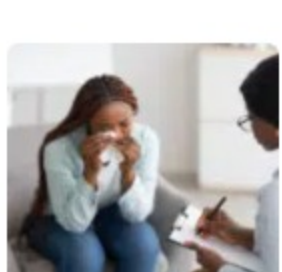
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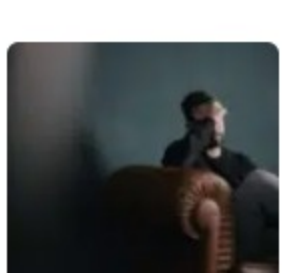
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How Your Body Reacts When You Use Anabolic Steroids

 Louisville Addiction Treatment Center -  January 31, 2022

Anabolic steroids are a class of drugs that increase the concentration of certain hormones in your blood that encourage the formation of new tissue. Drugs that increase testosterone, for instance, fall into this category.

Athletes and bodybuilders regularly misuse anabolic steroids in an attempt to achieve a certain type of physique and build muscle. In many cases, they take more than doctors would normally prescribe for legitimate medical conditions, leading to a host of potential health problems.

In this post, we look at some of the ways your body reacts when you use anabolic steroids. Check them out below.

Changes In Mood And Behavior

In the short-term, anabolic steroids don't usually cause psychoactive changes. You can't get "high" by taking them.

However, long-term use can change your mood and behavior. Many people abusing these drugs experience "roid rage" – a condition that predisposes them to get easily angered.

Others may experience fear or paranoia following prolonged usage. They may get a strange sensation that somebody is watching them or following them.

Others may also experience delusions of invincibility, believing that nothing can hurt them. These can be particularly dangerous and result in severe physical injury if left unmanaged.

Skin Problems

People who take anabolic steroids tend to develop worsening acne, particularly on the back, neck, and face. Generally, anabolic steroid misuse leads to a pernicious form of acne, called cystic acne, where areas of inflammation form under the skin but do not produce ahead. In many cases, this can lead to pain, with some particularly large boils requiring medical attention. Scarring may result.

Skin and scalp may also become dramatically more oily. Pores begin to produce more sebum in response to the changing hormonal environment within the body.

Jaundice is also a risk because of liver damage. When the liver cannot function as well (because of the presence of anabolic hormones), it causes a yellowing of the complexion and other areas of the body, such as the hands.

Women taking steroids can sometimes develop coarse skin. This is more likely when using topical steroid creams that may lead to skin thinning.

Shrinking Testicles

While anabolic steroids increase the level of testosterone in the blood, they also counterintuitively reduce the size of the testicles. Testicular atrophy – as it is called – is an adaptation to the new hormonal environment, designed to protect the testicles from anabolism.

This effect is not benign. It can lead to infertility and, in some cases, cancer, particularly when using steroids in combination with other growth-promoting hormones, such as IGF-1.

Changes In Women's Physiology

When women take anabolic steroids, they can develop more masculine traits, such as a deeper voice. They may also begin to develop facial hair and even experience male pattern baldness. Some bodybuilding women experience enlargement of the clitoris, an organ located at the top of the vaginal opening.

These effects result from increased testosterone. Body systems become confused by the hormonal environment, expressing themselves in a more male, rather than female, pattern.

Enlarged Heart

Because anabolic steroids signal to the body that it needs to grow, it can cause an enlarged heart. Also called "cardiomegaly," this condition can lead to abnormal heart rhythm, shortness of breath and swelling or edema in the extremities, such as the hands and feet. It is a life-threatening condition that requires urgent medical care.

Liver Damage

To process anabolic steroids and return the body to balance, the liver must work overtime. In so doing, cysts may form on it which can rupture, leading to hemorrhages. These can then cause internal bleeding that leads to death, in some cases.

Infections

People who use anabolic steroids often inject them with needles. Dirty needles can lead to a host of unpleasant infections, including HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Worse still, anabolic hormones may suppress the immune system, depressing its defenses against outside invaders.

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is the leading killer worldwide, responsible for more deaths than anything else, including smoking. Unfortunately, taking anabolic steroids increases blood pressure by changing the hormonal environment within blood vessels.

Again, the effects of this can be life-threatening. Elevations in blood pressure are known to put people at risk of heart attacks, strokes, artery damage and blood clots. When combined with a poor, meat-heavy diet, the risk of heart disease rises even more.

Wrapping Up

In summary, your body reacts negatively to anabolic steroids. Furthermore, short-term gains in fitness are usually offset by issues elsewhere in the body.

For those misusing steroids, treatment is available, both as inpatient and outpatient.

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