

## INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

A Needle and Syringe Program (NSP or the exchange) worker can give you information, help you find services and make appointments for you.

### Your Community Health: Steroid Education Program

0417 529 678

Provides non-judgmental advice and practical health information as well as referral to other services.

### DirectLine

1800 888 236 • [www.directline.org.au](http://www.directline.org.au)

24-hour. If you want to talk to someone about your drug use or find a support service.

Agency details:

SAFER  
USING 10

# STEROIDS

People use performance and image enhancing drugs for a number of reasons including bulking up, performing better or to look a certain way. These can include:

- + Steroids
- + Peptides
- + Human growth hormone
- + Insulin
- + Tanning injections.

When you buy these drugs from a dealer you can't be sure of what you're getting. Some steroids are meant for veterinary medicine and we don't know what they will do to humans.

Even though things may be marketed as performance enhancements (such as pre-workout) you are still taking a risk. The industry is not well regulated so there is no guarantee that you are going to get what it says on the packet. These products can cause health problems for some people. If you are going to use these products, it's best to speak to a doctor before you start and act quickly if you start having any health concerns.

## INSULIN

It's very dangerous to use insulin if you are not a diabetic as it can cause low blood sugar. If you are planning to use insulin tell a mate in case something goes wrong. Have some carbs handy in case you start to get dizzy or shaky (early signs of hypoglycemia, which can lead to coma and death).

## TANNING INJECTIONS

Tanning injections can make you nauseous shortly after use and can cause diarrhoea within 24 hours of use. As there is little research into these substances, we have no idea of their long-term effects.

Stock photo. Posing by model.

## STEROIDS

[Before you use any steroids, you should speak to the Steroid Education Program.](#)

## STEROIDS – SIDE-EFFECTS

- Side effects can be both physical and psychological
- Some side effects result in permanent changes
- Steroids can stunt your growth and prevent physical development.

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**Steroids have been linked to high blood pressure, liver damage and fatal heart attacks.**

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### Possible side effects for males can include

- Reduced sperm count
- Shrunken testicles
- Infertility
- Growth of breast tissue
- Dependence.

### Possible side effects for females can include

- Facial hair
- Menstrual abnormalities
- Deepening voice
- Enlarged clitoris
- Dependence.

## INJECTING RELATED PROBLEMS

**Bacterial infections** – when harmful bacteria get into your body and causes illness.

**Cellulitis** – skin infection that causes the infected area to become hot, red, and very painful.

**Abscesses** – collection of pus under the skin that is usually caused by an infection and can lead to blood poisoning.

## BLOOD BORNE VIRUSES (BBVS)

Even though steroids are injected into muscle there is still blood present, which can put you at risk of contracting a BBV like hep C or HIV. Sharing needles and syringes, or injecting from a shared steroid container puts you at risk of BBVs.

### How to avoid BBVs:

[Never share needles and syringes, swabs or steroid vials, even with friends.](#)

Wash your hands in warm soapy water or swab them before and after you inject.

If someone else is going to inject you, make sure they also wash their hands.

## INJECTING SITES

### Backside

Imagine your bum cheek is divided into 4 areas. Inject into the upper outside area as this will minimise the risk of hitting the sciatic nerve that runs down the middle of the cheek which can cause permanent injury.

### Outer thigh

The best place to inject in your thigh is on the outer side about half way between the knee and the hip.

### Shoulder/lateral deltoid

Inject into the middle shoulder muscle.

**There is more information on infections in the 'Infections' brochure in this series.**

## Preparation

- Wash your hands with soapy water
- If injecting water-based steroids, swirl to mix in any sediment – do not shake as this may cause excessive air bubbles
- Swab the rubber cap of the steroid vial
- Use a 19g or 21g needle to draw up
- On the syringe replace the drawing up needle with an injecting needle (23g, 25g x 1 inch).

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**As steroids need to be injected into muscle you should never use a needle that is less than 1 inch long. If you do you may end up with an infection.**

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## INJECTING

- Injecting equipment is available at a pharmacy or a Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) and the Steroid Education Program.
- Use a new swab to wipe the injection site – once in one direction.
- Remove any air bubbles by pointing the needle up and tapping the side of the syringe.
- With a quick movement push the needle into the muscle at a 90 degree angle and as deep as it will go.
- Pull back slightly on the plunger. If blood appears you've hit a blood vessel (e.g. a vein). Take the needle back out and inject again.
- Slowly push the plunger to inject the steroid – don't force it in.
- Apply pressure to stop any bleeding.
- Gently rub the injection site to help spread the steroid into the muscle. This may help stop bruising.
- Dispose of all injecting equipment appropriately – you can return it to the NSP.
- Wash your hands again.
- Never inject steroids into a vein as it can cause blood clots and other health problems.

## CYCLES

Steroids are traditionally used in cycles. Eight to twelve weeks maximum.

It's important to have breaks between cycles of at least as long as the period you used them for to give the hormone levels in your body a chance to go back to normal.

A break means not using steroids. It doesn't mean changing the type of steroid.

It is dangerous to use large amounts of steroids.

## SPORTING CAREERS

Oil-based steroids can work for a month or more after your last shot. You can test positive for some steroids for 12 months or longer after a single use. If you have or are hoping for a sporting career you should consider the possible outcomes of steroid use.

If you test positive for steroids you could be banned from competing in your sport.

## THE LAW

[It is illegal to manufacture, import, possess, use or supply steroids without a prescription or license. The penalties for breaking the law can be severe and you will get a criminal record.](#)

## STOPPING STEROIDS

People can become psychologically dependent on steroids which can make it difficult to stop using them.

If you are thinking about stopping steroid use you should speak to your doctor. They can help you with getting your natural hormone production back on track, or ring the Steroid Education Program where you will be able to get information and support.