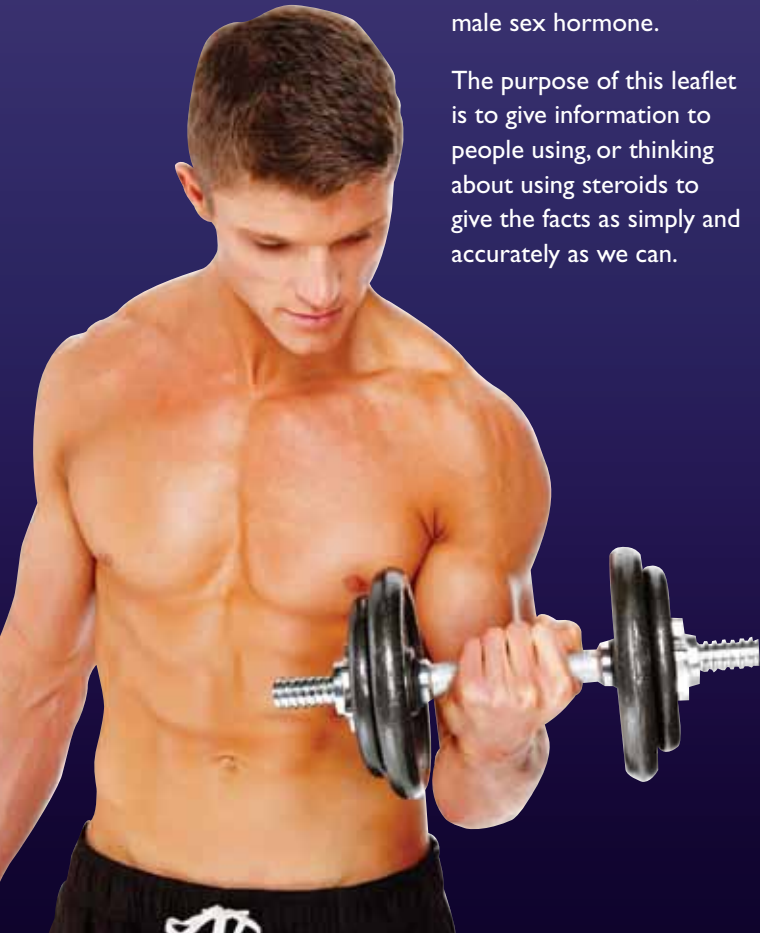


ANABOLIC STEROIDS

What do you know?

Anabolic steroids are chemicals which mimic the effects of testosterone, the male sex hormone.

The purpose of this leaflet is to give information to people using, or thinking about using steroids to give the facts as simply and accurately as we can.



How do they work?

Anabolic steroids are similar to the male sex hormone, testosterone, in the way in which they work in your body. They enable the body – in combination with exercise and a suitable diet – to develop muscle faster than it would naturally.

The side effects

Anabolic steroids tend to be taken in high doses and have side effects. They are not the same as testosterone which the body produces naturally. Some of the side effects come from exaggerating the natural effects of testosterone and some from the ways in which they interfere with the natural production of testosterone.

Skin and hair

Steroids can cause hair loss and acne. Bulking up very rapidly through steroid use can cause stretch marks leaving unsightly and permanent scarring of skin.

Feminisation

Steroids reduce natural testosterone production which can produce some effects that are feminising. The best known feminising effect is the development of breast tissue (so called bitch tits).

Toxicity

Steroids are toxic and are processed out of the bloodstream by the liver. The process of removing steroids from the bloodstream makes the liver work harder; the longer steroids are taken the greater the risk of liver damage.

Reducing or stopping natural testosterone

When steroids are introduced into the body they send a message to the testicles that they don't need to make natural testosterone. This effect is usually reversed when steroid intake is stopped. However, the longer steroids are used, the greater the risk of long term consequences such as a reduction in fertility.

In the short term some people feel down, depressed, anxious and even suicidal when they stop using steroids as the hormone levels fall in their body.

Mood changes and mental health

Steroids can cause an increase in aggression (known as roid rage) and rapid mood changes.

Pressure on the body

Taking steroids puts pressure on the heart and arteries. Taking steroids is like running a car on a higher octane fuel than it is designed for. In the long term this makes heart problems or a stroke more likely.

Sexual dysfunction

Interfering with sex hormones over a long period of time can cause sexual problems including loss of interest in sex, shrinking of the testicles and problems getting an erection.

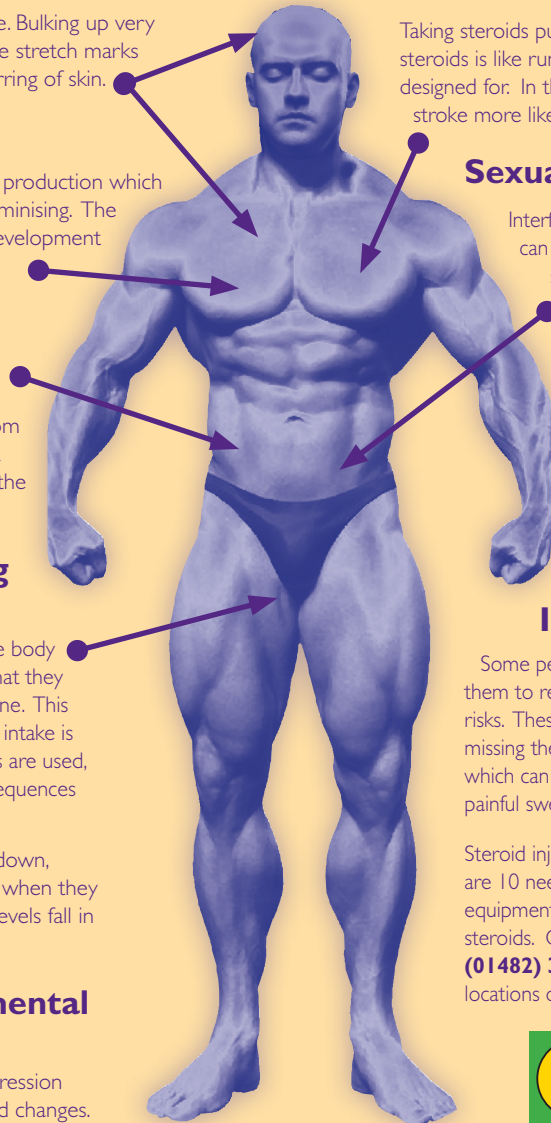
Young people and steroids

The effect steroids have on the body's hormones mean that there are particular concerns if they are used by teenagers. They can make the normal hormonal changes in young people more extreme. This may result in early hair loss and in young men who are still growing could stop them reaching their full height.

Injecting

Some people who take high doses of steroids will inject them to reduce damage to the liver; but injecting has its own risks. These include: infections from dirty or shared needles, missing the muscle and injecting into veins or body cavities which can cause inflammation of the veins (phlebitis) or painful swellings at the injection site.

Steroid injectors should not share or reuse needles. There are 10 needle exchanges in the East Riding providing free equipment and information on reducing the risks of injecting steroids. Contact the East Riding Partnership on **(01482) 344690** for information on needle exchange locations or for confidential advice on safer injecting.



Pharmacies displaying this logo are part of the needle exchange network.

Bulking up naturally

Bulking up naturally involves using food and exercise to add mass to the body without the side effects caused by steroids.

Bulking up to increase your muscle size requires resistance training and proper nutrition. This can be achieved using a variety of exercises and workouts. Proper technique contributes to quicker muscle growth and helps avoid injury.

Top tips:

Increase calorie intake

The most important factor in gaining muscular bulk is eating sufficient calories. Gaining muscle weight requires eating more calories than the body burns resulting in a caloric surplus. Adding 500 calories of protein and complex carbohydrates to daily caloric intake will help.

Eat balanced meals, frequently

To avoid gaining fat it is important to eat a balanced diet consisting of proteins, (complex) carbohydrates and healthy fats. Six to eight small meals per day is recommended to supply the body with a constant supply of fuel throughout the day. This will ensure a constant supply of nutrients to muscles to help them grow.

Execute compound exercise movements

In order for muscles to grow, compound movements are required. These are any movements that need more than one muscle to execute an exercise for example squats, dead lifts, barbell presses and other similar movements. Isolation movements are more for shaping the muscle rather than igniting the growth hormones in the body to gain mass.

Rest

It is important to get at least eight hours of sleep at night to rest muscles. This will help increase growth hormones in the body, which in turn will help gain lean muscle mass. It is a fact that the body does not grow in the gym. This takes place while the body rests. The body may look like it is increasing your bulk in the gym but this is due to muscles swelling which is only temporary and after an hour the effects start to diminish.

Cardio exercise

Cardio exercise uses up calories which are needed to bulk up, however cardio exercise is a good way of keeping off body fat during a bulking phase and a good way of keeping the heart healthy. Cardio increases the appetite so extra calories can be consumed to make up for the loss experienced during a workout.

Drink Plenty of Water

Water is essential; a target of two litres of water should be aimed for per day, more if the body sweats a lot during exercise.

Are steroids addictive?

Exercise is good but can become addictive as the body releases feel good chemicals called endorphins during exercise.

Signs of becoming addictive to exercise include over training, persisting in training through injury or illness or becoming obsessed with appearance or performance.

If steroids are added into this mix they can become part of a cycle of raised testosterone, exercise, improving performance, putting on muscle and looking good and wanting to do it all again.

People hooked into this cycle can find it difficult to stop using steroids even as the benefits start to diminish and the side effects increase.

Withdrawal from steroids can lead to a feeling of ill health as the body goes through a period of low testosterone while the body adapts to the change.

Some people who start on steroids move on to other drugs such as **Human Growth Hormone (HGH)** or start taking other drugs to counter the effects of the steroids such as **viagra**. Each of these have an effect on the body.



Steroids and the law

Steroids are classified as a class C drug in the **Misuse of Drugs Act**, making dealing steroids a criminal offence. One of the problems with steroids being illegal is that they are not covered by trading standards or the regulations regarding medicines and it is difficult to tell if what it says on the packet is true or whether steroids are contaminated or in date.

Caution should be given to information on steroids available on the Internet, much of which is provided by sites that are selling steroids.

Getting Help

To talk to someone about steroids or any drink/drug query contact East Riding Partnership **(01482) 344690**.

www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/health-and-well-being/drugs-and-alcohol-health-advice/

Young People

There are separate services for young people with drug or alcohol problems. Contact any of these localised numbers:

Beverley: (01482) 391300

Bridlington and Driffild: (01482) 391380

Goole, Howden and Snaith: (01482) 391360

Holderness: (01482) 391320

Haltemprice: (01482) 301340

Wolds and Dale: (01482) 391320.

Email: yss@eastriding.gov.uk

National Drug Helpline 0800 776600.

www.TalktoFrank.com

East Riding Leisure

For help and advice on bulking up and/or healthy lifestyles please make an appointment at any one of East Riding Leisure Centres. For details of your nearest centre call **(01482) 393939**.