



DYING TO WIN

A *nabolic steroids are drugs made from the male hormone testosterone. They stimulate muscle growth and weight gain. Take a few steroids, and you might develop the strength of an ox. You also might develop massive problems.*

What's the Big Deal?

Even small doses of steroids can be bad for you. Some doctors say that young athletes who take steroids for just a few months may be more likely to die in their 30s or 40s. That's one reason steroids are banned from professional competition.

Some of the side effects of steroids are relatively harmless—that is, if you enjoy being moody and mean. Taking steroids can also cause acne, bloody noses, headaches, dizziness, hair loss, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, ulcers, sterility, heart attacks, and liver cancer. Yikes! If they do all that, why do people take them?

Teenagers sometimes try steroids because they're

impatient with their bodies. They want to be bigger, stronger, and faster—now. But steroid use gets in the way of the body's normal growth. Steroids take a terrible toll, even on young, healthy bodies.

Sad Stories

Kids aren't the only people finding out about the dangers of steroids. A number of professional athletes have taken them.

Ben Johnson was an Olympic runner. He broke the world record in the 100-meter dash at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. But a test taken after the race showed that he'd been using steroids. Ben was stripped of his title and his medal and was not allowed to race for two years.

Not only that, but the sponsors who paid him to endorse their sportswear canceled all of his contracts. Fortunately, Ben was able to make a comeback. Now, after three years off steroids, he's in the running once again.

Former football player Lyle Alzado isn't so lucky. He's fighting for his life against a brain tumor his doctors think was caused by

steroid use.

Lyle started taking steroids in college because he felt he wasn't big enough to make a professional football team. Later, Lyle says, he couldn't stop taking the steroids because he didn't feel strong without them. His dependence grew until he was giving himself frequent steroid injections (in his bottom, to hide the marks) and taking lots of pills.

Now, because of the cancer, Lyle has lost most of the weight he put on with steroids—about 60 pounds—as well as his hair and most of his strength. The \$20,000 to \$30,000 he used to spend every year on steroids and growth hormones now goes toward chemotherapy to fight his tumor.

Some doctors say taking steroids is like swallowing a time bomb—you may not know when it's going to go off, but you know it will.

Lyle Alzado's illness and Ben Johnson's racing suspension have brought the dangers of steroid use to worldwide attention. Athletes and their fans are finally waking up to the fact that winning a race isn't worth losing your life.

—Elizabeth Bluemle

Dying To Win

1. Taking small doses of steroids will have no effects on your body?
True or False
2. Name three side effects of steroid use?
3. Anabolic steroids are made from the _____ .
4. Ben Johnson competes in what event in the Olympics?
5. Ben Johnson still has the Olympic record for the 100m dash?
True or False
6. How many years was Ben Johnson banned from track competition?
7. Doctors feel Lyle Alzado's brain tumor was caused by _____ .
8. How much money did Lyle Alzado spend each year on steroids?
9. When did Lyle Alzado start taking steroids?
10. Doctors say taking steroids is like swallowing a _____ .