

## Why Kids Use Performance-Enhancing Drugs

Performance-enhancing drug abuse is a dangerous problem. Athletes use these drugs to increase their muscle mass and improve performance. They feel pressure to perform well.



Drug use is not good for any athlete. The risks far outweigh any possible temporary benefits. The best training includes vigorous supervised exercise, a healthy diet, adequate rest and balanced social/school activities.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that in 2004, 325,000 teenage boys and 175,000 teenage girls used steroids. Parents, coaches and peers pressure teens. Emotionally immature, teens often do not make wise decisions. Many are risk takers who live for the moment.

Other reasons teens risk their health include:

- Frustration — when they reach a plateau or when their training does not produce desired results;
- Curiosity — what would happen if they took these drugs?
- Peer pressure — other athletes take these drugs;

- Increased self-esteem — from better performance or an improved body image;
- Need for a scholarship;

- Little chance of getting caught — no tests for some drugs.

Parents must get this message to their kids — performance-enhancing drugs are dangerous and can be fatal. You must:

- Know the dangers and risks. Talk to your doctor. Search the Internet. Read books.
- Talk to your kids about the dangers. Share news stories and information about tragic results of taking these drugs.
- Expect your teen to compete fairly without cheating. Be clear about your expectations. Repeat them often.
- Watch your teen closely for signs of drug/steroid use.

Talk with your teen's coaches and school administrators. Find out the school's policy on performance-enhancing drugs. Ask if they have a program that warns students of the dangerous side effects.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.  
544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.