

DANGEROUS

Supplements AND Substances

Tobacco products and drugs are not the only substances that can harm your body. Some supplements claim to make you healthier, stronger, and more alert. However, some of these products and substances can actually have harmful effects on your heart, nervous system, and cause a wide range of other physical and emotional symptoms or problems.

Weight Loss AND Fat Burning PRODUCTS



For many people, weight loss or maintaining a healthy weight is achieved properly through a healthy diet and regular physical activity. However, some people turn to supplements promoted as weight loss aids or fat burning products. These kinds of supplements can cause problems with the heart, nervous system, and the gastrointestinal system. In addition, they can aggravate blood pressure and cause dehydration.



ENERGY DRINKS

Energy drinks contain caffeine and sometimes other stimulants. They may give you energy for a short time, but they have several serious side effects. Energy drinks can make you shaky, irritable, and may have negative effects on your heart. They also dehydrate you because caffeine is a diuretic, which means it keeps your body from retaining water.

Anabolic Steroids

Anabolic steroids are often promoted as athletic enhancement and performance supplements. Unfortunately, people who use these substances to increase muscle size and strength can suffer more dangerous side effects.

- Steroids affect the heart and have been associated with heart attacks and strokes in young athletes.
- Steroids affect appearance by causing male-pattern baldness, cysts, acne, and oily hair and skin. Males can develop breasts, and females can start to grow facial hair.
- Steroids affect a person's mood and can often make people angry and hostile for no reason.
- Steroids increase the risk of infection, hepatitis, or HIV if users share needles.
- Steroids are illegal to use unless a doctor prescribes them for a specific medical condition.
- Steroids can be addictive and cause a wide range of withdrawal symptoms when someone quits using them.



Activities

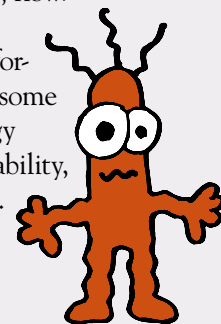


1. Choose one health effect related to using steroids to investigate further. Use the Internet or other informational sources to learn more. Share your findings with your classmates.

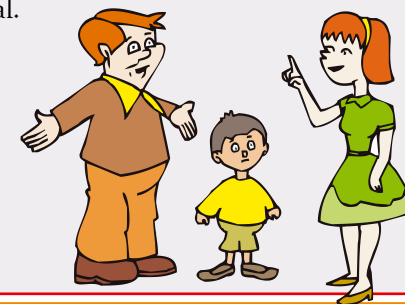
2. In groups, discuss how you feel about commercials or magazine advertisements that promote weight loss or improved athletic performance by taking a pill or supplement. What is your group's general opinion of these types of advertisements?

3. Have your teacher list the names of some of the most popular energy drinks on the market. Discuss the names as a class, and decide if they are designed to influence a consumer and if so, how.

4. Draw a poster or create an informational pamphlet that conveys some of the serious side effects of energy drinks, such as dehydration, irritability, and negative effects on the heart.



Home Connection With your family, discuss some of the health effects of using weight loss supplements, energy drinks, or steroids. How do your family members feel about these products, and were they aware of their harmful effects? Briefly, write your findings in your health journal.



Discussion Questions

What kinds of weight loss aids or fat burning substances have you seen advertised on television or in magazines?

Do you drink energy drinks and if you do, how do they make you feel?