

What is a Performance-Enhancing Drug?

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Performance-enhancing drugs (PEDS) are taken by athletes to increase their abilities or performance in a sport. The term *performance-enhancing drugs* refers to a variety of substances used by athletes. This list includes anabolic steroids and human growth hormone. PEDS are often used to build strong muscles and recover from injuries. Many athletic leagues have rules that do not allow athletes to use PEDS.

There is evidence of PEDS being used thousands of years ago. The Greeks created performance drinks to increase their abilities. The Mayans used cocoa leaves to increase their abilities. Today, athletes will go to many lengths to increase athletic ability.

Most young athletes will tell you that there is a lot of pressure to win. Besides the satisfaction of personal gain, young athletes often pursue dreams of making it to the Olympics, a college scholarship or a place on a professional team. In this environment, using PEDS often seems a good way to stay competitive.

For a growing number of athletes, winning at all costs leads to using PEDS. Some may appear to achieve physical gains from such drugs, but at what cost? Are there health dangers to using PEDS? The truth is that long-term effects of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs haven't been rigorously studied.