

Bodybuilding with steroids damages kidneys

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Athletes who use anabolic steroids may gain muscle mass and strength, but they can also destroy their kidney function, according to a paper being presented at the American Society of Nephrology's 42nd Annual Meeting and Scientific Exposition in San Diego, CA. The findings indicate that the habitual use of steroids has serious harmful effects on the kidneys that were not previously recognized.

Reports of professional athletes who abuse [anabolic steroids](#) are increasingly common. Most people know that using steroids is not good for your health, but until now, their effects on the kidneys have not been known. Leal Herlitz, MD (Columbia University Medical Center) and her colleagues recently conducted the first study describing injury to the kidneys following long-term abuse of anabolic steroids. The investigators studied a group of 10 bodybuilders who used steroids for many years and developed protein leakage into the urine and severe reductions in kidney function. Kidney tests revealed that nine of the ten bodybuilders developed a condition called focal segmental glomerulosclerosis, a type of scarring within the kidneys. This disease typically occurs when the kidneys are overworked. The kidney damage in the bodybuilders has similarities to that seen in morbidly obese patients, but appears to be even more severe.

When the bodybuilders discontinued steroid use their kidney abnormalities improved, with the exception of one individual with advanced kidney disease who developed end-stage kidney failure and required dialysis. Also, one of the bodybuilders started taking steroids again and suffered a relapse of severe kidney dysfunction.

The researchers propose that extreme increases in [muscle mass](#) require the kidneys to increase their filtration rate, placing harmful levels of stress on these organs. It's also likely that steroids have direct toxic effects on the kidneys. "Athletes who use anabolic steroids and the doctors caring for them need to be aware of the potentially serious risks to the [kidney](#)," said Dr. Herlitz.

Source: American Society of Nephrology ([news](#) : [web](#))

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