DHEA

url: https://www.opss.org/article/dhea-can-i-use-it  
  
  
DHEA: CAN I USE IT?  
  
DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone) is a hormone produced naturally by the human body, where it is released by the adrenal glands, gastrointestinal tract, sex organs, and brain. In fact, it is the most abundant steroid hormone in the body, mostly in a form known as sulfated or DHEA-S. DHEA itself is not an anabolic steroid, but the body uses it to produce other hormones, including testosterone and estrogen. DHEA also can be made in a laboratory; this synthetic form is known as prasterone. As an ingredient in dietary supplement products, it is mostly marketed for bodybuilding as a testosterone booster" (which it is not) or for nootropic ( cognitive enhancer ) actions.  
  
DHEA is not prohibited for use by Military Service Members currently and will not show up on a routine U.S. military drug test.  
  
Is DHEA safe?  
DHEA has been studied for a number of potential medical uses, but most research studies have been relatively small and for less than 24 months. Most side effects appear to be mild and often temporary. The most common is acne, but a variety of other side effects have been noted. Women might develop masculine features, and men might experience breast tenderness or enlargement, aggression, or testicular wasting, but it depends on the amount being taken.  
  
There isn t enough information about its long-term effects, but DHEA is being explored for possible uses to treat other medical conditions. In general, extensive research is ongoing and, so far, mostly inconclusive. DHEA can be converted into estrogen, so doctors should advise patients with any hormone-sensitive cancer (such as prostate, breast, or ovarian cancer) not to take DHEA.  
  
Can Military Service Members use supplements with DHEA?  
DHEA is a legal dietary supplement ingredient and not a controlled substance. Despite this, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) prohibits its use in sport. However, DHEA is not prohibited by DoD or any of the service branches.  
  
Will DHEA show up on a drug test?  
No, DHEA will not show up on a routine U.S. military drug test.  
  
How can I recognize DHEA on a product label?  
DHEA appears on dietary supplement labels by various names, but some names we have seen recently include:  
  
Dehydroepiandrosterone  
3b-hydroxyandrost-5-en-17-one  
3 -hydroxy-5-androsten-17-one  
Prasterone  
Androstenolone  
If you have a specific question about DHEA or a DHEA-like ingredient, you can use the OPSS Ask the Expert feature to send us your question.