

Androgens

General:

A subset of androgens, adrenal androgens, includes any of the 19-carbon steroids synthesized by the adrenal cortex, the outer portion of the adrenal gland (zonula reticularis - innermost region of the adrenal cortex), that function as weak steroids or steroid precursors, including dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEA-S), and androstenedione.

Besides testosterone, other androgens include:

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA): a steroid hormone produced in the adrenal cortex from cholesterol. It is the primary precursor of natural estrogens. DHEA is also called dehydroisoandrosterone or dehydroandrosterone.

Androstenedione: an androgenic steroid produced by the testes, adrenal cortex, and ovaries. While androstenediones are converted metabolically to testosterone and other androgens, they are also the parent structure of estrone.

Androstenediol: the steroid metabolite that is thought to act as the main regulator of gonadotropin secretion.

Androsterone: a chemical by-product created during the breakdown of androgens, or derived from progesterone, that also exerts minor masculinizing effects, but with one-seventh the intensity of testosterone. It is found in approximately equal amounts in the plasma and urine of both males and females.

Dihydrotestosterone (DHT): a metabolite of testosterone, and a more potent androgen than testosterone in that it binds more strongly to androgen receptors. It is produced in the adrenal cortex.

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