

Better to forget memory pills

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Bangalore: Although you might be goofing up big time in mathematics and chemistry formulae, try giving memory pills a miss this exam season. With board exams knocking on the door and stress levels surging, these 'magic pills' are fast vanishing from medical stores. Store owners are once again doing brisk business as they say the sale of these pills has gone up by 30%-40%. But here's a word of caution. Popping such pills is a strict no-no for health experts since their adverse effects are many.

HAPPY STUDYING

Alarmed with rampant misuse of such drugs, experts say these medicines, if taken over and above certain specific conditions, might often lead to serious side-effects like bleeding and insomnia. And when it comes to memory improvement, they might turn out to be zero-scorers.

"There may have been some research done in ayurveda and there are certain medicines that claim to enhance memory, but we definitely do not recommend sale of these over the counter as we don't know the side-effects of these tablets or syrups. According to one finding, these tablets increase the risk of bleeding," says Ratnavali E, consultant neurologist, Manipal Hospital.

Doctors say there is no scientific evidence to prove these pills are useful. "There is no chemical which can have a direct impact on memory enhancement. Elements like zinc, calcium, mineral, protein, iron and vitamins do play a role in improving concentration, but not memory. They just help the nervous system work well," says K Raghu, consultant psychiatrist, BGS Hospital.

The medicines that are sold without prescription for memory enhancement can also contain components like modafinil, ar-modafinil and stimulant medication, which, according to health experts, may lead to insomnia. "We use these components under certain specific conditions, but beyond that these medications can be

Blame it on the competitive education system or on parental pressure, students appearing for board exams are resorting to new avenues to score better. There is simply no stopping them, even if it means buying drugs over the counter in stores. Doctors say these drugs don't serve any purpose.

MEMORY BOOSTERS

- Sleep well. A good sleep of six to seven hours will consolidate memory and will enhance it automatically
- Proper diet and workout on a daily basis can work wonders
- Get rid of anxiety and frustration
- Meditation is a sure-shot way to improve concentration levels and thus memory

abused as well. If administered without supervision, they may cause insomnia," says Raghu.

Experts say although parents might notice an improvement in the child's memory after these medications, it has a lot to do with the child's confidence. "When parents reach out for memory pills, they are confident that these tablets will enhance their kid's memory. This confidence is passed on to the kid and thus an improvement is noticed," says Raghu.

Psychologist Meera Ravi explains: "Unless you get rid of anxiety, new learning cannot happen. Parents do come to us, mainly to take suggestions if they can use memory pills, but being a psychologist I cannot advise them on that. But I do let them know that meditation is something that works wonders."