

Printed from

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Cheap vitamin pill halts memory loss in Alzheimer's

IANS, Sep 9, 2010, 11.51am IST

LONDON: A low-cost [vitamin pill](#) could halt memory loss in Alzheimer's disease, finds a recent study.

The tablet worth only 10 pence, comprising three vitamin B supplements, slashed shrinkage of brain linked to memory loss by up to 500 percent.

[Oxford University](#) researchers described the finding as the "first glimmer of hope" in the battle to find a drug that halts development of Alzheimer's, reports the Daily Mail.

The breakthrough involves homocysteine, a compound, which is secreted in the body and, at high levels, has been linked to memory loss and Alzheimer's.

Vitamin B is known to break down homocysteine. Researchers decided to look at whether giving patients the vitamin would be good for memory, according to the journal Public Library of Science ONE.

Working with colleagues in [Norway](#), the Oxford team recruited 270 pensioners suffering from niggling memory lapses that can be a precursor to Alzheimer's.

Known as mild cognitive impairment (MCI), it affects one in six aged 70-plus, or 1.5 million Britons. Half of those with MCI will develop dementia within five years of diagnosis.

Half of those taking part in the trial took a vitamin B tablet a day for two years. The tablets contained extremely high doses of vitamins B6, 9 and 12.

For instance, the amount of B12 was up to 300 times higher than could be obtained by simply eating bananas, meat, wholegrains, beans and other foods rich in the vitamin.

The others took a daily placebo with no active ingredients.

Brain scans were done to test whether the pill reduced brain shrinkage that occurs as we age and speeds up in memory loss.

Vitamin B cut the amount of shrinkage by 30 percent, on average.

In those with the highest amounts of homocysteine in their bloodstream at the start of the study, it halved the shrinkage and in one extreme case, it cut it five-fold.

Those with the slowest rate of shrinkage did best in memory tests and in some cases their ability to recall lists was as good at the end of the trial as it was at the start.

Prof. [David Smith](#) of Oxford and study co-author said: "This is a very striking, dramatic result. It is our hope this simple and safe treatment will delay the development of Alzheimer's in many who suffer from mild memory problems."

[Co-researcher Prof. Helga Refsum](#) added: "Here we have a very simple solution: you give some vitamins and you seem to protect the brain."

The results suggest that a basic cocktail of vitamins can achieve results that have evaded pharmaceutical companies, despite billions of pounds being spent on experimental dementia drugs.

THE TIMES OF INDIA[About us](#) | [Advertise with us](#) | [Terms of use](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Feedback](#)Powered by [INDIATIMES](#)[RSS](#) | [New sletter](#) | [TOI Mobile](#) | [ePaper](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Archives](#)**Other Times Group news sites**

The Economic Times | [इकनॉमिक टाइम्स](#)
[छत्रेनोमिड टाइम्स](#) | [Mumbai Mirror](#)
Times Now | [Indiatimes](#)
[नवभारत टाइम्स](#) | [महाराष्ट्र टाइम्स](#)

Living and entertainment[Timescity](#) | [iDiva](#) | [Bollywood](#) | [Zoom](#)**Network**[itimes](#) | [Dating & Chat](#) | [Email](#)**Hot on the Web**[Hotklix](#)**Services**

[Book print ads](#) | [Online shopping](#) | [Business solutions](#) | [Book domains](#) | [Web hosting](#)
[Business email](#) | [Free SMS](#) | [Free email](#) | [Website design](#) | [CRM](#) | [Tenders](#) | [Remit](#)
[Cheap air tickets](#) | [Matrimonial](#) | [Ringtones](#) | [Astrology](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Property](#) | [Buy car](#)
[eGreetings](#)

Copyright © 2010 Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. All rights reserved. For reprint rights: [Times Syndication Service](#)