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**Lifestyle Health** Scientists develop pill that erases traumatic

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## Scientists develop pill that erases traumatic memories

BY ROSEMARY BLACK  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Friday, June 4th 2010, 3:01 PM



Tilley/Getty

Could a pill one day erase your painful memories? Scientists say they're getting close.

Swallowing medicine to erase painful memories may one day be as easy as popping a pill for a headache.

Scientists have created a drug that numbs the hurt of traumatic memories by filling the mind with feelings of safety and a sense of positivity, according to research in the journal *Science*.

Though so far it has only worked with mice, the technique eventually could help soldiers recover from posttraumatic stress disorder, accident victims forget their trauma and even jilted lovers forget about a terrible relationship.

To test the new drug, scientists gave mice traumatic memories by subjecting them to electric shocks as loud music played. Gradually the rodents came to link the music with the shock, and just hearing it was all it took to make them freeze up. When they were given a drug called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), the mice no longer appeared fearful.

While the researchers don't think the drug completely eradicates awful memories, it does appear to impart a sense of safety that works as a coping mechanism. Naturally produced in the brain, BDNF is in short supply in rats who had difficulty overwriting their bad memories, experiments showed.

"Many lines of evidence implicate BDNF in mental disorders," [Dr. Thomas Insel](#) of the [National Institutes of Mental Health](#), which funded the research, [told the Daily Mail](#). "This work supports the idea that medications could be developed to augment the effects of BDNF, providing opportunities for pharmaceutical treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder and other anxiety disorders."

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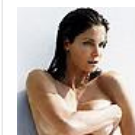
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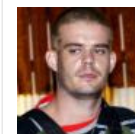
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The concept of erasing bad memories has long fascinated Hollywood and sci-fi writers. In the movie "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," [Jim Carrey](#) and [Kate Winslet](#) play a couple who go through a "targeted memory erasure" that eradicates all memories of each other when their relationship goes south.

Just last year, researchers found that some heart disease drugs could do double-duty, allowing users to get rid of bad memories at the same time they treated their heart conditions.

But there may be some low-tech ways of keeping bad memories at bay. Keeping a stiff upper lip during a trauma may ensure that bad memories aren't laid down in the first place, scientists say. And in a crisis, those who don't panic actually remember less about traumatic events they witnessed than more emotional people.

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#### BonScott

5:43:55 PM ummmm idiot, whatever your name is.... they've already invented something to erase your bad memories.... it's call ALCOHOL and it's been working for Centuries. Don't mess with a good thing.

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#### Old School Lower East Side

9:04:01 PM What else will this new found medicinal marvel be able to erase? political views? religious views? ethic preferences? sexual preferences? identity? I, too, will stick with the alcohol!

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#### Mainelyme

11:52:22 PM Hey People; It was drunken relatives who gave me the trauma!  
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#### jamesbrummel

9:13:15 AM Maybe they should summon their considerable resources to find a way to do research without torturing animals.  
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