

from

ABC News Online

sci-tech

the Lab's  
news in science

## Drug may block Alzheimer's

Friday, 29 October 2004

It might be possible to make a pill that prevents the brain damage that marks Alzheimer's disease, US researchers have said.

Scientists said they had designed a drug that, at least in test tubes, stops the build-up of sticky proteins that kills brain cells in Alzheimer's patients.

The approach, which keeps the proteins from clumping, may also work against other diseases including infection with the AIDS virus, said Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator Gerald Crabtree of Stanford University.

Mr Crabtree and colleagues Jason Gestwicki and Isabella Graef developed a small molecule that enlists the aid of a larger, naturally occurring "chaperone" protein to block the accumulation of the brain-clogging beta-amyloid protein.

Between the two of them, the small molecule drug and the chaperone protein stopped the building blocks of amyloid protein from linking up and making clogs, the researchers report in Friday's issue of the journal *Science*.

Now they will test it in animal models with versions of Alzheimer's disease.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease,

Earlier this week a team at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the University of Wisconsin said they found a naturally occurring brain protein that stops the progression of Alzheimer's disease in human brain tissue.

The protein, called transthyretin, appears to protect brain cells by intercepting beta-amyloid protein before it can damage brain tissue.

Drugs that boost transthyretin levels may help treat or even prevent the disease, the researchers told a Society for Neuroscience meeting in San Diego.

-- Reuters

### Breaking Sci-Tech News

[UK gives green light to embryo screening](#)  
[New drug gives hope to heart transplant patients](#)  
[Tas whale sightings encourage scientists](#)  
[Police conference scrutinises high-tech crime](#)  
[Australia's GM free status a 'polite fiction'](#)  
[Swiss Radio trades waves for web](#)

### Science News from the Lab

[Bats sing sexy love songs](#)  
[Footloose fish never grow up](#)  
[Shuttle set for May lift-off](#)

### Science Features

[experiMENTALS](#)  
[Wrinkle Free Zone](#)  
[What Element are you?](#)  
[Greenhouse Gas Grave](#)

ABC News Online

### More News...

[Breaking Sci-Tech News](#) . [Science News from the Lab](#) . [ABC Online News](#)



ABC News Online