

Candy drugs doing rounds in schools, parents warned

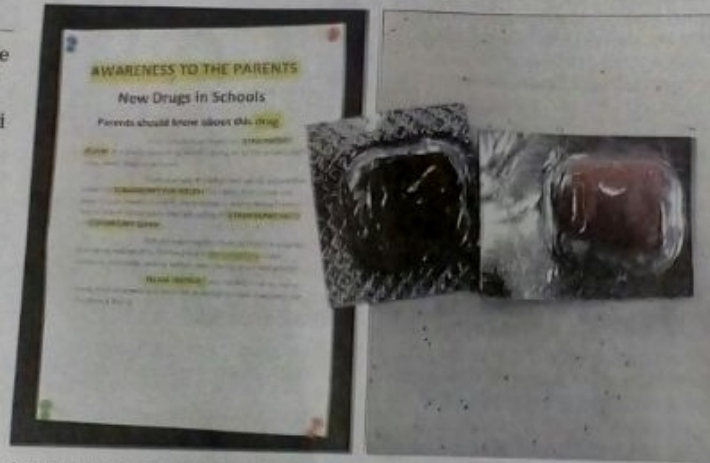
The new drug, which resembles strawberry pop rocks, is being handed out to pupils in schoolyards

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Mumbai: A new drug, in the guise of flavoured candy, is emerging as a major cause of worry for city schools. An elite school in Andheri recently issued a circular informing students and parents about a candy-like drug named 'Strawberry Quick', which contains methamphetamine — an ecstasy drug. The schools have asked parents to instruct their wards to not consume candies given by strangers or even friends.

"This new drug is doing the round in schools. We need to be aware. The new drug is something like crystal meth and resembles strawberry pop rocks. It smells like strawberry, and it is being handed out to schoolchildren in the yards. It also goes by the name of 'strawberry meth'. Please instruct your children not to accept candy from strangers," the circular stated.

"We were informed by parents in the school about this drug trade going on in neighbouring schools.



A circular issued by an Andheri school, and the candy drugs being sold in schoolyards

In order to spread awareness among students and parents, we posted the circular and made sure that the students are counselled about the drug. We have also informed the police to conduct workshops for students on drug abuse and its side effects," said a senior

school management official.

According to the Anti Narcotics Cell (ANC) of the city police, seizure of drugs such as methamphetamine and mephedrone in different colours have been made in the past in powdered form, but not in the form of flavoured candy.

"We have seized a pink coloured methamphetamine in powdered form. Owing to its colour, it may be possible that the coloured drug can be mixed with the candy to make it look like a regular strawberry sweet," said an ANC officer.

The officer, however, added that no case has been reported so far to indicate if students were obtaining or selling the drug laced strawberry candies. "We will turn our focus on educational institutions to curb sale of the drugs," said the officer.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Ashok Dudhe said: "We have started a probe, and have asked the ANC to look into the matter as it is a serious issue. Such incidents will be investigated on a priority basis to ensure schoolchildren do not fall prey to these drugs."

Andheri resident Jessie Joseph, whose ward studies in class IX, said: "We informed the school principal about the problem, and requested them to conduct a counselling session. Drug abuse should be dealt with strictly."