

Better Homes

and Gardens

AN ISSUE BIG AS ALL OUTDOORS!

50 ideas to put you ahead of summer: patios • fences
furniture • screen areas • storage • playhouses • gazebos
parking • lighting • plus new annuals • perennials • trees

How your family can cope with daily stress, tension

THE MISUSE OF "HAPPY PILLS."

The exaggerated faith once placed in country doctors—who, judged by present-day medical standards, were almost totally unequipped to perform the miracles requested of them—has now been transferred to a host of "wonder" drugs. According to popular belief, pills hold the answer to everything. Anyone plagued by insomnia can cure it by taking a sedative. Depression or fatigue will vanish if you swallow a "pep pill." Tensed up and nervous? What easier solution than a tranquilizing drug?

The powers falsely attributed to pills are astonishing even to doctors. In Baltimore, for example. Drs. Lee Park and Lino Covi, psychiatrists at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, recently gave "placebos" to each member of a group of anxiety-ridden patients. (Placebos are sugar pills that contain no medicine—but they often ease a patient's symptoms because he *thinks* he's getting potent medication.) But Dr. Park and Dr. Covi told their patients *in advance* that their pills would be nothing but sugar. Nonetheless, the members of this

group—without a single exception—reported dramatic improvement in their conditions. One woman insisted the study was a trick; the pills were so effective, she claimed, that the doctors had deceived the group by saying they contained only sugar. (She was wrong—the doctors *had* told them the truth.) Other patients asked for large supplies of the pills so they could take them after the study was completed. So condi- *Continued*

BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS, APRIL, 1967

HOW TO COPE WITH EVERYDAY PRESSURES

Continued

tioned were these patients to "miracle" cures that they refused to accept the facts.

Similar false claims are sometimes made for tranquilizers and other "mood altering" drugs. Such compounds are a long way from placebos, of course. Their chemical potency is considerable, their therapeutic value unquestioned. In the treatment of deep emotional disorders, both in and out of mental institutions, tranquilizing drugs have caused a virtual revolution. But these compounds *do not* provide instant euphoria, and neither do their milder counterparts that (unlike the true tranquilizing drugs) are legally sold without a doctor's prescription.