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True blood: get a live analysis of your body

A new live blood analysis claims to tell you what's going on inside your body in an instant. Jasmine Gardner went for a test



Big picture: live blood analysis allows you to see a magnified image of your own cells



Jasmine Gardner

02 May 2012

The last time I looked at anything under a microscope was at school, identifying the nucleus of a plant cell. So seeing my own blood — fresh out of my fingertip — is a novelty. The red blood cells are buzzing around as though they have somewhere better to be (in my body, probably, rather than under this lens). Magnified 1,000 times with a dark-field microscope, the cells show up against a black background and — in much higher-tech fashion than in that Nineties science lab — are displayed on a MacBook Pro.

This live blood analysis is the latest naturopathic health check to hit Harley Street. Katrin Hempel, a natural therapist, claims that with a drop of blood she can identify bacteria, yeasts, fungi, vitamin deficiencies, organ stress and many other potential imbalances in your body. There's no waiting for results — you watch your blood sample onscreen while she points out indicators for problems.

However, this test is not a full blood count so it doesn't provide any readings of cholesterol levels, measure haemoglobin or tell me how many white blood cells I have.

Before I arrive I have been instructed to fast for five hours. I've also filled out a lengthy questionnaire about my diet and health, including everything from prescribed drugs I'm taking to sensitive matters including lavatory habits and stranger concerns such as whether I've ever lived next to a farm.

It seems like almost enough detail for identity theft, but this is all to help Hempel find the causes of anything untoward she spots under the microscope.

Fortunately, at first glance nothing looks too bad. My white and red blood cells look pretty normal, which is a comfort.

Photographic examples of abnormalities in the blood are on the table in front of me, showing how white blood cells might appear if a viral infection was present or a rouleau of red blood cells, usually caused by disease, where they appear stuck together like coins in a stack.

Hempel points out a fuzzy clump in my blood picture, which she says is a platelet (they make the blood clot) aggregation. She explains that this can suggest a lack of omega-3 fatty acids — commonly found in fish. A few red blood cells also look small,

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which could indicate a slight iron deficiency. Neither of these things surprises me, since I eat a largely vegetarian diet, but seeing it onscreen is fascinating — if a little disconcerting.

A bit more investigation around the blood on the slide shows up clumps of white strands. Hempel claims this is due to liver and bowel toxicity. I tell her that I don't drink much these days, but apparently I can't undo the damage of my student years. A possibility of yeast in the gut could be the result of taking antibiotics and an excess of refined carbohydrates in my diet.

Hempel's answer is a diet overhaul and a cocktail of supplements — including cod liver oil for the omega-3 and probiotics for my gut.

She writes out a full nutrition plan, which includes substituting olive oil in my cooking with coconut oil (it contains lauric acid, which aids digestion), ditching my addictions to wheat-laden pasta and bread and increasing my protein intake — with raw buffalo milk, no less. Having seen my blood on screen has made an impact and at least makes me want to give it a go and see if anything changes. That challenge starts now.

Live blood analysis, £150 until the end of June, £250 thereafter (07952 865430, londonnaturaltherapies.co.uk).

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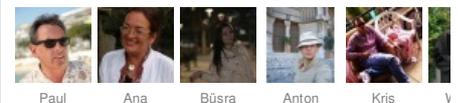
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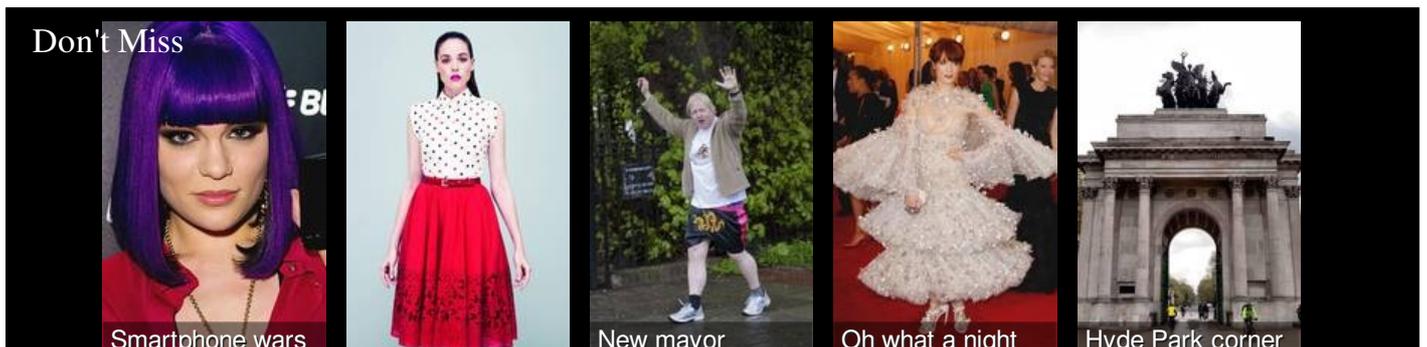
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