

WELLBEING

Your Best Shot

Said to give you more energy, help fight off winter colds and even cure a hangover, it's little wonder that vitamin and mineral infusions are a hit with the A-list. Is it time to join the IV league?

When Rihanna tweeted a photo of herself hooked up to an intravenous drip two years ago, fans were concerned. However, there was no need to worry – the Barbados-born beauty wasn't ill but joining a growing number of celebrities using a vitamin and mineral infusion administered via a saline solution to give them an energy boost. Cheryl Cole is rumoured to be a fan while her former *X Factor* co-judge Dannii Minogue hooked up the main man Simon Cowell, who said the treatment left him with "an incredibly warm feeling".

Devotees of the procedure say the cocktail boosts energy, cures hangovers and gives them the drive to keep living life to the max. The A-list love vitamin shots – Madonna once infamously injected Justin Timberlake with B12 in the bottom after he complained of feeling unwell while they were recording together – but is not just celebrities who are hooked. In Las Vegas, the Hangover Heaven bus travels around offering the service while US GPs now routinely give vitamin B12 injections, saying they treat flu, colds, constant tiredness and anaemia.

Not everyone is convinced, however. Here in the UK, vitamin B12 injections are only available on the NHS if you are proven to be deficient in the nutrient or are undergoing certain types of chemotherapy and there is little or no evidence to support the idea it has any effect on the rest of us.

One person who believes otherwise is Esther Fieldgrass, who pioneered vitamin and mineral infusions in the UK and now provides them at her EF MediSpa clinics in London, calling it their Drip & Chill.

"I've seen more than my share of rock stars, city boys and TV celebrities have the Drip & Chill," she says.

It was while living in Hong Kong that Esther discovered the nutrient-rich IV drips. "I



Kelly Osbourne is hooked, as is Cara Delevingne (below left) and Rihanna (below right)



immediately noticed the difference it made to my health and wellbeing," she tells us.

Unable to find a clinic offering the treatment back home, she started to research ways to offer it herself. EF Medispa now has a range of infusions, each prescribed by its in-house doctor after clients fill out a detailed questionnaire to help

determine their exact needs. "The usual mix would be vitamin C to boost immunity, B12 and the B group for energy and magnesium for relaxation," says Esther. "It's great for anyone who works hard or parties hard, who feels that they are prone to getting colds and flu or simply needs a boost. People walk out of here saying that the world somehow seems brighter after an infusion."

During the 45-minute treatment, an intravenous needle is inserted into the crook of the arm and hooked up to a saline drip filled with a selection of water-soluble vitamins and minerals. The only side effects are mild bruising and a sore arm for a couple of days and fans talk about walking out on a high.

But does it actually work? If you are dehydrated and deficient in magnesium, you will notice almost immediate benefits. However, claims it delivers an energy boost are completely unfounded and have no scientific evidence to back them up. Also, because the vitamins currently available are all water soluble, anything your body doesn't need will simply be expelled in your urine.

Despite this, clinics offering the treatment say their waiting lists are full, with many people seeing the IV drip as a more effective way to take nutritional supplements – although even its proponents say infusions should not be used regularly as a way to undo the damage caused by excessive drinking or a diet rich in junk food.

"Vitamins and minerals in a tablet form are often rendered useless to the body by the time you've digested them while others pass right through when you go to the toilet," says Esther. "With an infusion, you get them directly into the bloodstream so you can deliver them at higher doses where needed." ■

• EF Medispa Drip & Chill treatments start at £250, visit efmedispa.com

HEALTH NOTES



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► **H2Oh!** Choosing the flawless Jennifer Aniston to be its global spokesperson is not the only clever thing about Glacéau Smartwater. Added electrolytes mean you can hydrate quickly without the need for added sugars or sweeteners. Available from supermarkets, it costs 57p for 600ml and 89p for 850ml.



► **All change** An estimated two million British women are currently going through the menopause, more than ever before. Yet many still don't know who to turn to for help, which is why World Menopause Day on 18 October is sending out the message to contact your GP for diagnosis and treatment options.

