



I AM MADEM -OIS ELLE

Our columnist comes face to face with the *bare truth* of her DNA

Through my loud tinnitus, I hear, 'All normal, except for G – Glycation.' REALLY? My X (matrix), relating to collagen, suggests I'm ageing 'normally'. My T (tone) shows no sign of pigmentation; I would hope not – raised in Scotland, I'm allergic to the sun. But the bit I am most surprised at, given the fact that I live on a busy road in central London, is A (antioxidant). Apparently, I have a 'normal inflammatory response to stress and pollution'. I make up for being so bloody 'normal' (boring) with category G. At the top end of the scale, I run a risk of 'advanced glycation' and – GULP – 'internal ageing'. I'm ageing on the inside!

Out from behind the comfy seat I've been uncomfortably sitting on for the past hour appears a large, luxurious black box. I prize it open to find a three-month supply of vitamin supplements, a slender tube of eye cream, a serum, a pot of face cream and a foam cleanser, all chosen to work specifically with my DNA. I ask the two doctors whether further DNA testing could provide me with the perfect set of instructions for other stuff, like what I should be eating and what type of

I'M IN THE LOUNGE area of a swish central-London hotel, awaiting a set of test results. Clammy hands, sweaty brow, twisted stomach... God knows why I agreed to have a DNA test. What if I carry a degenerative disease? What if my head is scheduled to fall off at some point in 2018? What if, what if, what if, WHOA!

Of course, I haven't been tested for any underlying health issues (#drama) – the test I've had will figure out how I'm ageing. I'm nervous, but styling it out fairly well, or so I think, as Dr Anne Wetter, dermatologist, and Dr Elisabet Hagert, professor of orthopaedics and hand surgery, flip

open a laptop and shuffle a set of papers towards me. The best friends are over from Sweden for the day to launch Allél, a range of skincare products and supplements that are specifically blended to match their client's DNA. 'Sixty per cent of how we age is determined by our DNA,' it says on a sheet of paper in front of me. And the rest? Lifestyle. Oh dear. Wine, anyone? Mine's a large one, thanks.

X – Matrix, G – Glycation, T – Tone, A – Antioxidant, C – Calming. I'm staring at my test results: 'With each individual's report, we look at 16 verified and reliable DNA markers and identify five key drivers in ageing,' says Dr Hagert. Have 'The Rave Years' finally caught up with me? Sensing my fear, Dr Hagert begins to speak slowly. 'We look at the skin's pigmentation and photo-ageing caused by UV damage, and we look at ageing caused by free radicals and oxidative stress, as well as a lack of antioxidants. Then we check the skin's energy, or glycation – which is how sugar is metabolised in the skin, which can affect skin stiffness and deep wrinkles. And finally, the skin's sensitivity to inflammation.'

exercise I should be doing. In a flash, the medical duo produces two further DNA test swabs, which I scrape around the insides of my cheeks in the manner of someone who no longer suffers from a morbid fear of test results.

When the second lot of DNA tests return from the lab in Sweden, the results show I have 'an increased risk of obesity'. Oh. 'People who carry this gene variant can decrease the risk of obesity through physical activity and with the help of a proper diet and strong exercise.' I take to my bed with a bar of Green & Black's and slather myself in Allél serum. I reckon it's the serum that's giving my skin that 'post-shag glow' everyone keeps commenting on – honestly, my skin looks and feels incredible. It's better than sex. As for my additional DNA tests, I guess it's time for 'strong exercise'. I'm working on it... I'm working on it.

See the Allél range at allel.com

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