

The blood-curdling way to young skin

The quest for eternal youth has seen us slapping on potions of snake venom, bird poo and even purified snail slime. Now a new treatment is in town. S3

– or Dracula – therapy is not for faint-hearted people who don't like blood or needles. That includes both me and, it seems, my doctor, Daniel Sister. 'I'm not very good with needles,' I whimper as he points the offending instrument towards my arm. 'Me neither,' he grins. Yikes.

Dracula therapy involves taking a sample of your own blood, mixing it with amino acids and vitamin C, and immediately injecting



Dr Sister: Less pain

Hallowe'en health: It's not for the faint-hearted but you could be batty not to try this rejuvenating therapy, even if it is named after Dracula **BY LISA SCOTT**

it back into your problem area. According to Dr Sister, we age because we are damaging the heart of our cells – the DNA – but by mixing amino acids and our own blood, we can help our cells self-mend or 'regrow'. In fact, the incision from the needle alone causes a healing response because the body produces more stem cells to fix the area.

The treatment was first developed by dentists to treat receding gums; they

used a process similar to Dracula therapy to help regrow bone and gum. 'Then we realised it could be used anywhere on the body – it really is borderline with stem-cell research,' says Dr Sister as he places a vial of my frothy blood into a machine that sounds like a microwave.

The machine separates red cells from the two other components in blood; platelets and plasma.

'Until recently we thought a platelet just had a clotting function but we now know it has more power,' says Dr Sister, of BeautyWorksWest in Notting Hill, west London. 'It has a strong stimulation function – and stimulating cells is essential in the fight against ageing.'

The vial comes out and at the bottom sit the red blood cells. On top are the plasma and platelet – a clear serum which has come from my body. I am finding it all a little gross.

Next comes the important bit: mixing my serum with the magic stuff. As Dr Sister mixes liquid versions of amino acid (small proteins famed for their collagen-producing properties) and vitamin C with my serum, he tells me Madonna, the Peter Pan of fiftysomethings, is rumoured to have tried this same treatment. 'I can well believe it, too – she has great skin for her age,' he says. 'She is big into holistic treatments and has pretty much tried every other non-invasive

TREATMENT

CORNER

● **On test this month:** Unreal spray tan

● **Why we like it:** Unreal won't turn you orange because its tanners are trained to look at your skin type and decide how intense the tanning solution should be. It also changes its ingredients depending on the season.

Creator of Unreal Liz Hawthorne explains her approach: 'Skin is much drier in winter because we tend to cover up with trousers, opaque tights, and switch the heating on. During the colder months we add more moisturising ingredients such as aloe vera, jojoba, hibiscus flower extract, and Vitamin E into our formulas to



keep the skin smooth.' My lovely tanner, Rose, who sprays Hollyoaks actors and Radio 1 presenters, also makes the whole standing naked thing as comfortable as possible.

● **Why we don't:** It's a tough one. The session didn't leave me feeling sticky or streaky – and I certainly wasn't orange – but I could definitely smell a stale biscuit smell that only fake tans have.

● **Details:** From £20 per session. To find a sprayer in your area visit: www.unreal.me.uk Rose is in north-west London, email her on: treat_me_nice@hotmail.co.uk



technique so it would be a natural choice for her.' Dracula therapy can be used anywhere on the body – the face, hands, cleavage or knees and even elbows (whatever next?). I breathe out and close my eyes as Dr Sister injects the final potion into my forehead, cheeks and neck.

The tiny perforations make me wince and the liquid drips lightly on

to my face, which feels odd. Then he injects deep into my smile lines. For a second I feel nothing, then my eyes water, I squeal, hold my face in both hands and nearly fall off my chair.

'Anti-ageing used to be very painful,' says Dr Sister, as I continue writhing in agony. 'And my philosophy was always no pain, no gain. But the 21st century has led us to all sorts of

The 'I didn't expect that to happen' one

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