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A QUESTION
FOR OUR
URBAN DOC?



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326m Cubic miles of water on earth; 97 per cent of it is salty or otherwise undrinkable

SOURCE: VITTEL

70 Percentage of the human body that is water

SOURCE: VITTEL

the lab
HEALTH NEWS

Drug-like link to aid Parkinson's?

Boosting levels of natural chemicals in the brain similar to the active ingredients of marijuana could help relieve symptoms of Parkinson's Disease. Scientists at Stanford University in California treated mice with the compound, and a drug already used to treat Parkinson's. When both were given together, there was a significant increase in mobility—when either was given alone, there was no significant effect.

Amino acid may cure obesity

Researchers who have discovered that removing a single amino acid from the diet is enough to trigger a starvation response say the discovery could be used to help treat obesity. They found that removing the amino acid leucine from the diet led to the body stopping fat synthesis and consuming virtually all its stored fat within just a few weeks.

More elderly will incur cancer...

Europe's ageing population will lead to higher cancer rates, a French study suggests. The report said that the number of cancer cases diagnosed in Europe each year increased by 300,000 between 2004 and 2006. The authors of the report said better screening programmes for breast and colorectal cancer, and preventative measures like anti-smoking campaigns and programmes to combat obesity, could help to slow down the trend.

...but screening tests improve

A test that can predict whether early breast cancer is likely to return within five to ten years has been approved for use by health officials in the US. The test, called MammaPrint, can accurately predict which women are low risk 90 per cent of the time. But the Food and Drug Administration said doctors should take into account other factors like medical history and other test results when deciding how aggressively they will treat tumours.

BEAUTY

What're you doing for lunch?

London is filled with fast treatments that promise to transform you in a lunchtime. But do they work? We sent *thelondonpaper's theBuzz* editor **Zoe Griffin**, who must look good 24/7, to test them

1 Deep cleansing facial £120 for 80 minutes

WHY? Deep cleansing facials promise to leave you looking years younger by getting rid of the city dirt.

WHERE? I went for an OXYjet facial at Janet Ginnings salon in Mayfair. It promises to penetrate layers of skin that no other facials reach, cleaning off the greying top layer to leave a clean under layer, boosted by vitamins and pure oxygen. Celebrities like Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox Arquette, Lisa Kudrow and Sadie Frost are all said to be OXYjet fans.

WHAT HAPPENS? After gentle cleansing, a deep exfoliation gel was applied to my face, which made my skin feel cold and slightly raw. This was followed by a moisturising cream containing vitamins A, C, D and E. The OXYjet machine itself was quite frightening, looking like something from a hospital operating theatre rather than a beauty salon. It was shaped like a huge electronic box with a vacuum tube hanging out of it, made a worrying whirring noise, and there were farting sounds when the

vacuum part was left on my skin too long. I was uncomfortably aware of the plastic rim of the tube even though the therapist used moisturiser to make the process smoother. Fortunately, the treatment ended pleasantly, as a relaxing mask was applied to the skin. I drifted off to sleep under a warm towel with an oxygen mask on my face so I could breathe in good air that apparently would improve my mental state.

VERDICT The exfoliation part of the treatment left my skin feeling clean like never before.

I left with quite a raw, red face, but apparently that's normal for first-time customers, and is why a course of five treatments is recommended. The next day my skin was a lot smoother and that lasted for about another two days.

home.
btconnect.
com/
janetginnings
020 7499 1904

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FACIAL | Lovely smooth skin. Just don't worry about the farting sounds

body parts THE THYROID

What is it?

The thyroid is in the middle of the lower neck below the larynx (voice box) and just above the collarbones. It's shaped like a bow tie and on average weighs 10-20 grams. It is one of the endocrine glands, which produce hormones and regulate all of the body's physiological functions.



What does it do?

It produces a thyroid hormone that governs the rate at which the cells in the body work. If the thyroid is underactive (hypothyroidism), not enough hormone is produced and the cells slow down. This can lead to problems like hair loss, constipation, anaemia and tiredness. If too much thyroid

hormone is produced (hyperthyroidism), the cells work faster than they should, causing problems like increased sweating, palpitations and anxiety or panic attacks.

What does it hate?

The thyroid needs iodine to make hormones, and a deficiency can cause hypothyroidism. Too much iodine (usually only as a result of taking supplements) can impair function and cause hyperthyroidism and autoimmune thyroid disease, in which the immune system attacks the thyroid. Age is the

main risk factor for an underactive thyroid. By 60, 17 per cent of women and 6 per cent of men suffer. Overactive thyroid is most common between 20 and 40. Both conditions are more common in women than in men.

How does it work?

It takes iodine found in many foods and converts it into thyroid hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Once produced, T3 and T4 are transported throughout the body via the bloodstream, controlling metabolism such as the conversion of oxygen and

calories into energy. If levels of T3 and T4 drop too low, the pituitary gland will produce a thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) to encourage the thyroid to manufacture more hormones.

Eat for your thyroid

Foods such as prawns, fish, crayfish and mussels are all good sources of iodine. Doctors are now recommending eating iodine-high foods three times a week to get the necessary amounts for your thyroid to work effectively.

ROBERT GRAINGE

2 Dental improvements £2,000 for two hours

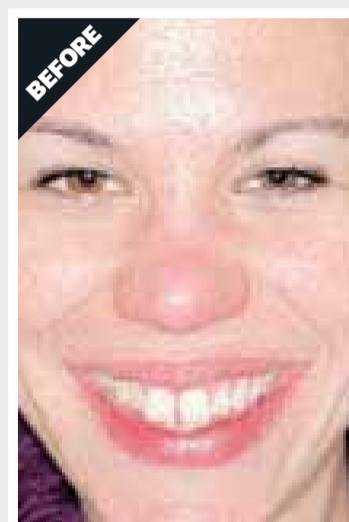
WHY? I've always wanted to get my teeth fixed, but I thought dental work would be too expensive and too painful.

WHERE? Harley Street dentist Tariq Idris was recommended to me by an actress friend, who had the work done before going off to Hollywood. I was intrigued when I heard he could improve my smile in two hours – was it too good to be true?

WHAT HAPPENED? I felt completely relaxed as soon as I entered Idris's Harley Street surgery, which was a surprise as I normally get nervous when going to the dentist. Idris started by taking some photos of my teeth to illustrate what needed doing.

My incisors were set too far back from my front teeth, and my front teeth were too wide and had a gap between them.

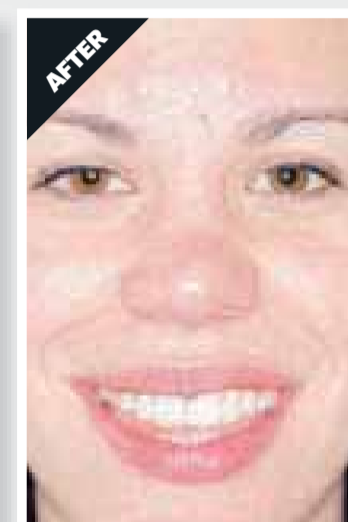
Idris used a composite resin – a mixture that looked a bit like concrete – to make the teeth thicker, and brought them to the same level as the



front teeth. He used the same mixture to fill in the gap between my front teeth. He also filed down my teeth to bring them into proportion.

VERDICT Apart from the anaesthetic injection, it was surprisingly pain free. When I looked in the mirror afterwards, I was shocked by how much my mouth had changed in two hours.

The composite resin sets straight away and I went out that night and ate and drank as normal. Now, two



months later, everything is still there – despite eating crunchy apples and biting off sticky tape with my teeth. Don't expect this treatment to leave you with a flawless, dazzling white smile though – Idris works to naturally improve your own teeth instead of using artificial veneers.

www.ntsml.com
0800 085 0027
www.gdc-uk.org

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3 Hypnotherapy £48 for 70 minutes

WHY? I have always been forgetful and have a problem with timekeeping. Could hypnotherapy help?

WHERE? Michael Millett, from Elevated Therapy, specialises in improving mental performance.

WHAT HAPPENED? I sat in an armchair, covered by a cash-

mere blanket, and Millett told me to focus my breathing.

After a few minutes, I was told to focus on five things – the heaviness of my eyelids, the weight of my head, my arms, my feet and the blanket. I felt light-headed and extraordinarily happy.

Millett then started praising me and telling me that he knew that by the end of the session, I would start regulating my timekeeping. And that when I did, I would feel happy and satisfied.

VERDICT I was expecting to go into a trance, but was aware of everything. The pep talk did

work. I left with a big grin on my face and I noticed a temporary improvement in my timekeeping. But by the end of the week, my timekeeping was as bad as normal.

A single session might be good as a one-off pick-me-up, but there's no guarantee of long-lasting results. So, be prepared for a second visit.

www.elevatedtherapy.org.uk
020 8453 0426
www.generalhypnotherapy-register.com

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4 Semi-permanent eye make-up £75 for 75 minutes.

WHY? Luscious lashes make you look wide awake, even if you have been partying the night before. But they take precious time in the mornings.

WHERE? Shavata, from Urban Retreat in Harrods, comes with recommendations from celebrities like Kylie Minogue, Jade Jagger and Elle Macpherson. I went for an eyelash tint and extension.

WHAT HAPPENED? For the eyelash tinting, cotton strips were laid across the top and bottom of my eyelids to protect them from the dye. The dye was left for

15 minutes. Next, each of my eyelashes had a longer fake lash glued to it. The glue kept getting into my eyes, which was uncomfortable, but I forgot the pain as soon as I looked in the mirror. The new lashes made me feel feminine and fabulous.

VERDICT Ten minutes more in bed for a whole month, and no more frantically applying mascara on the bus. Definitely a case of no pain, no gain. www.shavata.co.uk
020 7893 8333

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urban doc

DR ANJLEE SHETH



SHAMED BY BAD BREATH

Q I've been told I have bad breath. What can I do?

A This can be really embarrassing and not so easy to fix when you're put on the spot. My patients hardly ever admit to bad breath – in fact, they're often in the dark until a friend points it out. Anyone not sure can check by breathing into a paper bag, or licking the back of their hand, letting it dry and smelling.

About £3 million is spent every year on breath fresheners, so you are certainly not alone, but it can be tricky to pinpoint exactly why it's happening.

Bad breath, or halitosis, is caused by chemicals like hydrogen sulphide, which are produced when you break down food, drugs and mouth cells.

Some foods – like curry, onion and garlic – cause a lingering problem, because they take a couple of days to break down completely. If you're starving and your body begins to break down fats, you may also notice smelly sweet breath temporarily.

Everyone gets "morning breath" because of food debris and dead cells building up overnight. These can be brushed away and shouldn't cause a lingering stench.

Everyone has bad breath occasionally, but, for some, persistent bad breath becomes a big problem. This can be down to poor oral hygiene, or just brushing your teeth incorrectly. Dehydration is another culprit, so make sure you are drinking plenty of water. Respiratory infections (like sinusitis or

tonsillitis) or gum disease can also cause bad breath. The easiest way to freshen breath is to mask the smell with mints or spray fresheners. But they won't treat the root cause. Brushing with toothpaste for five minutes twice a day with regular flossing is the solution to most bad breath. And it's likely that electric toothbrushes are more effective at clearing plaque (bacteria and food debris). Sugar-free chewing gum and mouthwashes containing chlorhexidine will help clear out bacteria and reduce gum disease. And finally, avoiding things like curries and cigarettes will make a difference.

If you're still having problems, then a dental hygienist can give you a check up and clean. Sometimes the problem lies in your nose, throat or stomach, so it might be worth consulting a doctor. The British Dental Association can help get you feeling fresher, faster.

Anjee Sheth is a GP working in central London

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION LOG ON TO thelondonpaper.com/contribute