

HOW SAFE IS THE IV 'PARTY GIRL' DRIP?

AS 'DRIP CLINICS' START OPENING ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WE PUT THE CELEBRITY PICK-ME-UP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

When Rihanna posted a photo of from a hospital bed two years ago with a needle stuck in her arm – just after cancelling a concert citing 'exhaustion' – the 'party girl drip' trend was born.

The 26-year-old singer was one of the first of a string of celebrities who headed to private clinics to take up a cocktail of high-dose vitamins, fed intravenously into the bloodstream. The mix is said to instantly cure hangovers (hence the 'party' tag) and revive energy levels. It is also believed to treat a number of conditions including dehydration, migraines and even depression.

Most celebrity users have the procedure as a boost when they are feeling exhausted from their hectic lifestyles. Indeed, six months later, Rihanna was on a drip again just days after partying at the Met Gala fashion extravaganza in New York. Other celebrities who have used an IV drip for their fatigue include Cara Delevingne and Simon Cowell (see box on facing page) – but it's not just for the rich and famous.



Left: Rihanna kicked off the IV trend (below) with a tell-tale Twitter snap (below left) two years ago

they feel under par and need a boost. Stress depletes our vitamins and minerals,' he says. Dr Berkowitz believes that getting vitamins fed intravenously into your body is far more efficient than taking traditional supplements.

'It's more effective than tablets because the dose you are given is the dose that is going into the body through the bloodstream,' he explains. "With capsules you can never assume 100 per cent absorption because it has to go through the stomach and intestines and may not be fully absorbed.'

The IV drip procedure involves



a bespoke mix of multivitamins and each session can last for up to two hours. 'There are a variety of formulas like the Myers' Cocktail, which has B vitamins, magnesium and a high dose of vitamin C,' says Dr Berkowitz. 'A lot of people have Myers' with additional vitamins. It can be tailored to each individual depending on what they need.'

The body-boosting effect from the drip can be immediate, but people often need three or four sessions to feel the full benefits. And at around £120 per session, a course of vitamin drips doesn't come cheap.

'Once people start to feel better, they may not need to have another session for a month,' says Dr Berkowitz. He is also quick to stress that the treatment is not a replacement for a healthy lifestyle and doesn't give users a licence to burn the candle at both ends. 'You are always going to need a work-

life balance. The drip is not an alternative to eating well and doing exercise,' he says.

Vitamin drips aren't without their dangers either. Too many sessions could cause hypervitaminosis, where the high levels of vitamins cause the body to go toxic. And too high a dose of vitamin B6 is believed to cause severe neurological problems. There is also the risk of infection. It is no surprise then that top nutritionist Claire Baseley (facing page inset, left, www.clairebaseley.co.uk) is sceptical.

'There is a medical place for injectable vitamins and minerals such as vitamin B12 and iron, but only to correct medical deficiency and as a short-term substitute for a healthy diet,' she says. 'Our bodies are designed to receive vitamins and minerals in food form, not in synthetic drips or tablets. A healthy diet with plenty of plant-based foods should provide all the nutrients the body needs and will allow for short-term excesses such as nights out or holidays when the odd binge is inevitable. In a healthy individual, at best, IV vitamin drips will have no benefit and simply be a waste of money.'

However, Dr Berkowitz insists many people swear by their recovery effects. 'The rise in the number of patients we have had and the fact they keep coming back shows that the drips are hugely beneficial to them,' he says.

But he stresses the importance of finding the right clinic and ensuring the doctor undertaking the procedure is registered with the General Medical Council (GMC). 'Administering a drip is a medical procedure so you have to make sure the practitioner is qualified and practises in the right environment,' he says. 'Once you do that, the risks are minimal and you can enjoy incredible benefits after just a few sessions.'

CELEBRITY HOOK-UPS



SIMON COWELL

TV mogul Simon has revealed that one of the ways he keeps up with his hectic lifestyle is by having weekly intravenous drips. His 'IV cocktail' of choice includes vitamin B12, magnesium and vitamin C and it is said to have been recommended by former *X Factor* judge – and Simon's ex-flame – Dannii Minogue.

Simon, 54, says: 'When you have it done, it's an incredibly warm feeling. You feel all the vitamins going through you. It's indescribable but very calming, and then it gives you energy for a good few days afterwards. Everyone I've recommended it to, they've loved it.'

CHERYL COLE

Pop starlet Cheryl sparked speculation that she had become a fan of vitamin drips when she posed for a promotional picture (right) with a plaster on her arm two years ago. The photo followed a punishing schedule in the run-up to the release of *Call My Name*, her smash-hit single of 2012.



While Cheryl, 30, never confirmed her use of the drip, the returning *X Factor* judge has admitted she had a vitamin injection in her bum to help her cope with the revelation that her ex-husband Ashley Cole had cheated on her.

CARA DELEVINGNE

In January, model Cara and girlfriend Michelle Rodriguez got themselves matching IV drips – as you do! The 21 year old posted a picture on her Instagram

page of their arms hooked up to needles, alongside the caption 'I V Drippin', instantly causing concern among fans.

Within minutes, she was inundated with messages asking after her health. Shortly afterwards, Cara tweeted: 'Don't worry! It's just a vitamin drip to help with a cold. Thanks for the messages x.'



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