

# true blood

When it comes to analysing your health via your blood, Miranda Kerr could just be onto something, says Sarah Ranawake.

I've always been a sucker for a celeb recommendation, especially when it comes to health and fitness. So when I heard that Miranda Kerr had been raving about her nutritionist Sally Joseph ([sallyjoseph.com.au](http://sallyjoseph.com.au)) and how she uses live blood cell analysis to gain valuable insights into her patients' bodies, I was immediately curious about what health secrets my blood might contain. Because, despite the fact I'm a pretty health-conscious person (my love of fatty cheese notwithstanding), I definitely don't feel like I'm walking on sunshine each morning. I'm hoping Sally might be able to explain my digestive issues (bloating, general discomfort) and why I often feel tired and rundown.

## analyse this

"I like to incorporate both routine blood tests and live blood cell analysis with every patient I treat," says Sally. "Rather than simply observing and treating a person's presenting symptoms, my approach is all about identifying and dealing with the underlying cause. My

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focus is also on empowering people to take control of their own health by teaching them about their bodies."

With this in mind, Sally sends me off to see Jennie Burke, director of Australian Biologics ([australianbiologics.com.au](http://australianbiologics.com.au)), who performs two blood tests on me (expect to pay about \$200) - live blood cell analysis and a clot retraction test (CRT). While I didn't have to skip food beforehand, I was told not to use my phone for at least two hours before I came in (I later found out this was because mobile use can have an effect on your hormones - a scary thought).

Unlike other blood tests I've had in the past, Jennie uses a simple finger pinprick (much less painful than having vials of blood taken) and puts slides with my blood under the microscope.

## veins of data

There's a monitor linked to the microscope so I can see my blood as Jennie points things out. I'm blown away by how much she knows about me just by looking at the blood samples and without taking a case history (that's Sally's department). She picks up on the fact that I drink water when I eat - a big no-no because it dilutes the acid in your stomach and thus means you can't digest your food properly. She even sees that I have some muscular inflammation on the lower left side of my back (an old gym injury that flared up a few days before the test). All just from a few drops of blood!

"With the live blood cell analysis, we can garner a large amount of information in one test," confirms Jennie. "We can tell if there's B12 or iron deficiency, excessive oxidative stress, inflammation or infection, and we can also determine liver function, fat digestion and immune cell activity."

When I have my consultation with Sally to discuss the results in detail, I find out that I'm low in iron. And the CRT tests reveal that my levels of stress hormones

are too high. It also indicates I'm reacting to certain foods in my current diet (my beloved cheese may have to go!).

The colonies of good bacteria in my intestines are also unbalanced. Sally tells me this is especially important because up to "70 per cent of our immune system is contained within the intestine, so the state of those good bacteria colonies influence the function of our immune system".

Poor digestion is also a key issue for me and means my nutritional needs aren't being met. "You always hear, 'You are what you eat', but I say to people, 'We are only what our body absorbs'," explains Sally. "The health benefits from food come from the body's ability to digest it. Your tests show you aren't fully absorbing the nutrients from your meals."

Miranda Kerr is a fan of live blood cell analysis.



## little red flags

While the evidence of my health issues makes me feel a little despondent, I'm comforted when Sally explains that live blood cell analysis is about measuring you against an ideal state of health rather than just looking for diseases.

"There's a big difference between an optimal state of health and a diseased state," says Sally. "Just because we don't have a serious illness doesn't mean we're in perfect health. It's often not until people experience total wellbeing that they realise how good they can feel."

This was certainly the case for Jane\*, 28, who came to see Sally with a history of UTIs, sinus infections and a lack of energy. Jane's blood revealed that, like me, the good bacteria in her intestine was out of whack. Her liver also wasn't too happy with her daily red wine intake.

"I went to lots of specialists about my UTIs, but no-one ever told me any of the underlying reasons why I was prone to getting them," she says. "Also, I was often tired and had congested sinuses, but I didn't know there was a link between these things. Since I've done Sally's digestive rehab program to address the causes, I no longer have issues. I feel more energetic and uplifted; like I have a responsibility to my body now." □

\*Name has been changed.