

GOOD IN-BUILT
ANTIOXIDANT
PROTECTION

COMPROMISED
IMMUNE
SYSTEM

25

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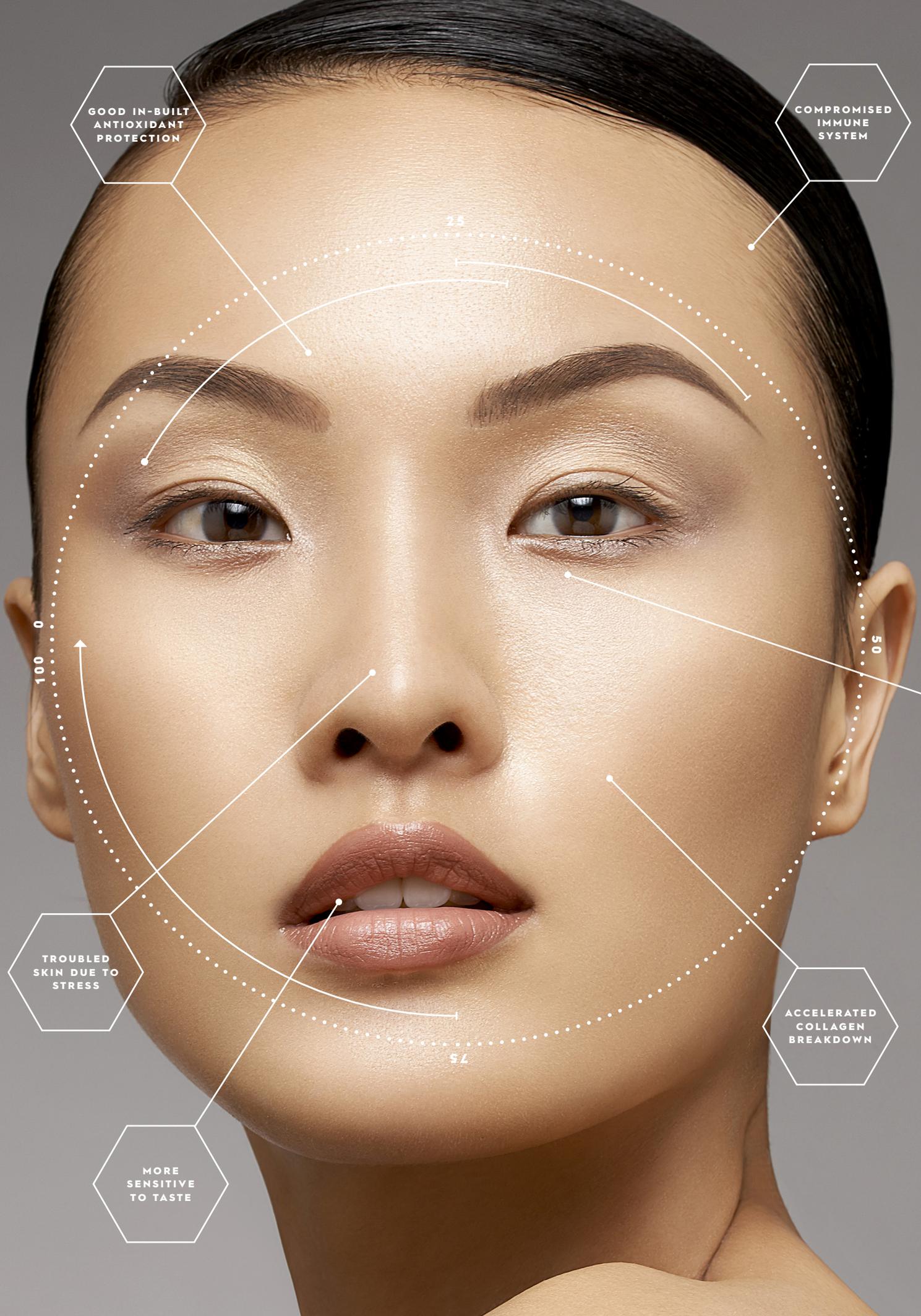
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TROUBLED
SKIN DUE TO
STRESS

ACCELERATED
COLLAGEN
BREAKDOWN

MORE
SENSITIVE
TO TASTE

75



MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

SIGNS OF
ADRENAL
FATIGUE

A new breed of hi-tech DNA-powered tests are poised to unlock the secrets of our bodies. *Stylist* explores why it's time to embark on Project You

WORDS: JOANNA MCGARRY
PHOTOGRAPHY: VINCENT ALVAREZ

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ou've run out of moisturiser. Sigh. But, rather than trek to the nearest beauty

counter to study 14 different formulas before settling on one that looks like it *might* work, you upload your personal genetic profile to an app. The app analyses your DNA and seconds later, it has evaluated your skin's primary skincare requirements. You hit a button and, the following morning,

your very own customised moisturiser – one that requires not even a smidgen of good faith, one that was perfectly tailored to your skin's needs – lands on your doormat. The dream, right? Only, this scene is just a few years away from becoming a reality.

Right now, we're on the cusp of a beauty revolution powered by DNA testing. For the first time ever, our unique genetic profiles are within reach and this is set to change the way we eat, sleep, exercise, plus what we put on our skin. It could even make the pain of finding a foundation to

match your skintone a thing of the past. In fact, the influence of genetics in health and beauty is being billed as on the same scale as the birth of the internet – there is simply no limit to where it could take us.

"This is the next phase in terms of beauty and wellness," reports Victoria Buchanan, strategic researcher at trend forecasting agency LS:N Global. "We're seeing a shift from people spending on products to spending on mind and body-enhancing experiences." And genetic testing is an entirely new experience that plays

into our thirst for information.

Plus, it's booming. Recent figures show that the global consumer genomics market is set to reach \$4.6 billion by 2025. "We believe it's the future of skincare – that's why we're becoming part of it," says Dr Frauke Neuser, principal scientist for Olay. "Genetically, we are 99.9% identical – but it's that 0.1% difference that makes us totally unique. And some of the biggest differences we see are in the skin."

Having partnered with early DNA testing pioneers 23andMe, Olay



→ is one of several big beauty companies working like the clappers to be on the crest of the wave, sinking huge budgets into genetic research that will be funnelled into the creams we ultimately apply on our skin.

While 23andMe was one of the first to provide a detailed report on ancestry and propensity towards disease, now countless start-ups are scrambling to the fore, offering everything from bespoke DNA skincare and DNA-fuelled nutritional delivery services to custom-fit boot camps that use your genetic profile to work out just how much further you can really run (gulp). A word of warning, though. "There's a lot of pseudo-science out there," says Neuser. "Some companies are quick to make connections that haven't been scientifically proven. This sort of research takes time and we're still a few years away from connecting all of the dots."

Still, the hype surrounding DNA testing has unearthed a new appetite for personal data: we want to know what's *really* happening inside our bodies. So, alongside these services, a slew of hormonal and nutritional analyses are fast becoming the conduit to athlete-level health. The revered Cyrex tests identify foods your body can't absorb, while saliva tests give a report on your reproductive hormones, insulin and adrenal levels, any of which could be responsible for changes in your skin, weight and energy levels. "I think of this as a new wave of predictive, personalised, proactive, participatory medicine," says Dr Sara Gottfried, a physician and gynaecologist. "We are becoming pioneering biohackers who want to improve our health by any means possible."

And the benefits are far-reaching. "It's driving a more preventative approach to beauty. This knowledge allows us to feel empowered to make better decisions," adds Buchanan. Knowledge is power, and it's in high demand. It's a monumental leap considering 50% of Brits still don't know their blood type (guilty). So, if you're young, hard-working and health-conscious, it's only a matter of time before your own health profile begins to shape your lifestyle. Are you ready to go beyond skin-deep?



HOW TO UNLOCK YOUR GENETIC PROFILE

Four members of the Stylist team report back on their own DNA testing



The health test

Acting editor Susan Riley trialled **lamYiam, £387, a genetic test to improve general wellbeing**

Before: I try to be healthy but time is limited. Gone are the days where

I was able to dedicate time to a single task like yoga, so a general MOT definitely piques my interest.

Method: It was straightforward: just spit in a tube and post it off, then register and set health goals online. I chose to try to improve my attention span.

Results: Five weeks later, my results were displayed online as four pie charts: diet, nutrients, fitness and health. It revealed that my body struggles to break down carbohydrates. Never knew that. I'm also a 'supertaster' with a high requirement for proteins. For extending my attention span, Pilates, nutritional therapy and Chinese acupuncture are recommended as well as supplements of fish oil, pectin and vitamin D. Useful but more general advice rather than DNA specific.

Verdict: Hearing that I 'genetically' have the potential to become obese and can 'outperform others when it comes to endurance activities' made me sceptical. I am naturally slight and was always last in cross country. So while I did find some of the nutrition information interesting, the contradictions made me question how much I could trust the rest.



The skin test

Stylist's acting deputy editor, **Alix Walker, trialled Geneu, £480, a bespoke skincare service**

Before: I battle with dryness and dark circles and am aware of ageing

in a way I wasn't before. I'd like to feel like I'm doing something to look the best I can. But I'm also lazy and so the idea of edited choice, personally tailored to your DNA, is hugely attractive.

Method: At Selfridges Geneu counter a 'skincare scientist' handed me a swab to do a swipe of my mouth, I then filled in a questionnaire about my lifestyle – all of which was then sent to a lab. Two days later, I received my personalised skincare kit, the results of my gene test and instructions to use each of the two serums prescribed twice a day.

Results: The test looked at two genes responsible for skin ageing: collagen breakdown and antioxidant protection. Apparently, I have excellent antioxidant protection, despite living off caffeine and sugar. But my collagen breakdown is happening at a 'slightly accelerated rate'. I'm relieved it's not worse, though, and my bespoke serums will deliver the collagen-forming ingredients and antioxidants I need.

Verdict: I've been using each serum every morning and night for three weeks. It's a routine that has slotted seamlessly into my life and my skin definitely feels more velvety after using both religiously.



The stress test

Beauty director **Samantha Silver** tried a hormonal test for adrenal fatigue with **Dr Sohère Roked** at **Omniya London, from £150**

Before: I'd been running on empty

for a long time. My skin looked puffy, my nails were weak and my thoughts whirring. "Feeling tired at the end of the day but being unable to sleep is a classic sign of adrenal fatigue," explains Dr Roked.

Method: Quite tricky. I had to spit into a tube and freeze it four times in one day – without eating for an hour beforehand each time – before sending off the sample for analysis, which takes around a week.

Results: Off the scale. The average woman's post-waking cortisol level is around 33nmol/L; mine is 53nmol/L. In fact, mine remains high all day and peaks again late afternoon when I'm scrambling to finish up in the office before collecting my little boy. Dr Roked told me that overproduction of stress hormones like cortisol leads to tiredness, troubled skin and, potentially, autoimmune conditions.

Verdict: It's been eye-opening to learn that how I feel isn't 'normal'. A meditation app could help, as could mindful breathing. According to Dr Roked, if we hadn't picked this up, I'd have been in danger of burn-out. I now know I have to make some changes.



The hair test

Beauty intern **Anna Muradova** trialled the **Hair DNA Scan Test, £100, at Urban Retreat at Harrods**

Before: I'd always been proud of my dark blonde, waist-length curls.

Then, six months ago, I noticed a tiny bald patch. I presumed it was caused by the weight of my hair so I chopped it into a long bob, but still it remained.

Method: The process begins with an informal consultation with trichologist Ricardo Vila Nova. Then he took several strands of my hair from the root for analysis – to identify whether the main cause of my hair change is genetic, nutritional, metabolic or due to my nervous system.

Results: Five days later, I was shown a scan of my hair blown up to look like trees. Ricardo pointed at a coloured area and asked if I'd taken supplements in the past three months. In fact, I had been prescribed Prednisolone for bronchitis. So rather than being genetic, my hair change had been triggered by external influences. "Your body was getting rid of the toxins through the skin on the scalp," he said. My immune system may have been compromised too, so nutrients from my diet were not reaching my hair.

Verdict: After a scalp-soothing treatment, I leave feeling more in control of my hair. A blood test would pinpoint the vitamins my immune system is lacking but a month later my bald patch is almost healed.