At Last, A Solution for the TATT Generation...*Evening Standard*

By Alice Hart-Davis

Health&Fitness

At last, a solution for the TATT generation

Sophie Anderton was Tired All The Time until a bizarre new blood test discovered the cause of her fatigue

by Alice Hart-Davis

Remedies for exhaustion

It could be the answer to one of society's most common medical problems. A bizarre array of expensive, high-tech tests investigating hormone levels and parasite infestations may sound bewilderingly complex to solve a problem as simple as being tired. But if you are exhausted, it's never that simple. Fatigue has become one of the 21st century's most debilitating yet underrated conditions, difficult to diagnose and almost impossible to cure unless one dramatically alters one's coffee-and-adrenaline-fuelled lifestyle. One in five people now suffers from a severe lack of sleep, according to the latest research, with 11-hour working days becoming the average, rather than the exception.

Fatigue can cause anything from constant coughs and colds to sexual dysfunction, diabetes and even arthritis. More often than not it can lead to sudden physical breakdown, which is what drove model Sophie Anderton into a state-of-the-art medical clinic for treatment just before Christmas. "Three months ago, I felt terrible," she says. "I couldn't get up in the mornings and felt completely burned out. I've worn myself out before but this time it was worse. I knew I had to address it. But that required time and focus. Being so busy meant I never had time for either, so I hit rock bottom before doing something about it. "It wasn't that I was partying too hard. I don't tend to go out as much as I used to. Work is very tiring. Modelling is perceived as an easy ride, but it involves constant hanging around and a lot of traveling. I've tried taking vitamin pills, indulging myself with pampering, doing yoga and taking exercise, but to keep myself going I tend to drink a lot of coffee, Red Bull and Diet Coke, for a pick-me-up. Failing that , Galaxy chocolate is an instant sugar rush and keeps me going on grueling fashion shoots. All these things help in the short term, but they were no longer enough."

Then, late last year, Sophie sought a tailor-made recovery programme at the HB Health Clinic in Beauchamp Place, where anti-ageing guru Heather Bird uses a special Fatigue Programme to analyse what causes someone's exhaustion.

"First the clinic's doctor runs a series of assessment tests," says Bird. "We test the client's blood, urine, saliva and hair to establish and initial picture of their health- of possible vitamin and mineral deficiency, for example, and of cholesterol levels. The amino acids are monitored [these help indicate how the body's metabolism is functioning] and the hormone-balances are analysed, because imbalances can lead to anything from poor memory to depression.

"After the initial tests, if we realise there are deeper problems, we can use an electron beam tomography scanner [which takes a detailed picture of the body's organs] or run a biological age scan, which tests all the body's functions that indicate the biological ageing rate.

"Increasingly, we are using live blood cell analysis, where the doctor can project the results of the test on a screen in front of the patient. If they can see how unhealthy their red blood cells look, all sluggish and stuck together because of lack of sleep or eating the wrong foods, it has an impact.

"Exhaustion is on the increase for many reasons," says Bird. "One big problem is lifestyle. People base their social lives around alcohol. They consume huge amounts of coffee and sugar, and younger people mess up their sleeping patterns with a nightclub lifestyle. They might come to see me because of weight gain, memory loss or problems with sexual performance. But when we run the tests, they realise it's linked to fatigue."

Sophie was signed up for the fatigue programme, and put through the biological age scan. "When I was told of the problems with my hormonal balance, metabolism, stress and general levels of toxicity, it encouraged me to make some changes," she says.

These involved a detox programme including organic vegetables fruit and nuts – cutting back on meat and fish, dairy products, wheat and processed food – a course of vitamin supplements and a special "hormone releaser" which encouraged her body to produce hormones, and a programme of massage and relaxation techniques. The sort of simple changes few of us find time for. But failing to take action can have serious long-term consequences.

Dr. Rajendra Sharma, medical director of the Diagnostic Clinic, and integrated health clinic in central London, has seen a huge increase in patients with exhaustion. "Not getting enough rest leads to an increase of adrenaline to keep you going. This speeds up the metabolism, which causes deficiencies in the body.

"If you are deficient in antioxidants, you run a greater risk of heart disease, strokes and cancer. If you are producing excess adrenaline and are deficient in certain vitamins, it could lead to conditions such as diabetes and arthritis, which are arguably deficiency disorders. And if adrenaline is pumping blood to areas such as the heart and brain, it won't be supplying blood adequately elsewhere, which reduces the oxygen supply to these areas.

"Lack of oxygen increases the risk of cancer and reduces your immunity. Put together, excess adrenaline, reduced nutrition and oxygenation make body tissues age faster. So it's serious."

After three months' strict adherence to the plan Sophie feels quite different. "I'm feeling a million times better than I did. I'm full of energy, eating healthily and feeling great. For now, I'm concentrating on working for a new modeling agency called Next, so I will be going to a lot more castings and fashion shoots.

I won’t give up partying completely – you’re only young once. But I do other things, too, like having regular massage and eating the right foods, having a night in front of the telly rather than pushing myself to the max.

“If I don’t stay on the programme, the doctors can see it very quickly. I know how bad I felt and I don’t ever want to go back there again.”