

# DareMe: IV Infusions

Oftentimes in journalism you approach an assignment with a particular focus, or even expectation, and it's always exciting when your discoveries change everything. You're forced to lean into the curve.

That's exactly what happened when I was dared to try IV infusions at The Petteruti Center for Life Extension in Warwick. Because IV infusions are a method of combatting hangovers, this dare was perfect for our Spring Beer issue. We've all heard the rumors about IV trucks in Las Vegas or the lounges at LA beaches - the magical panacea that staves off hangover ailments. Are they even real? Does it really work?

Rest assured, it's an exceedingly effective means of easing the stiff headache that comes the morning after one too many stiff drinks, and it's only one of many services offered at the center.

I wasn't quite sure what to expect from The Petteruti Center going in other than a swanky IV infusion area they call the Drip Bar, but I was pleasantly surprised to uncover what feels like a mecca of alt-health in Rhode Island.

Holistic health is a subsection of alt-health that focuses on the whole person rather than the reactionary treatment of a particular ailment (which is usually what you get from traditional medicine). It's a proactive way of looking at things that has you focusing on "how you can live your most healthy, vibrant day, today," according to the center's founder.

Dr. Stephen J. Petteruti DO, the eponymous doc running the show, operates as a concierge doctor, meaning that rather than the traditional, pay-as-you-go model of care, you get a slew of services included in a monthly fee. The full name of the center includes "Life Extension," which converges with several branches of the practice: a highly effective weight loss program, overall concierge medicine and the Drip Bar.

"We take the best science out there and apply it to the patient's greatest needs in the moment," Petteruti says. The administration of hormones and macronutrients as part of a proactive health plan isn't exactly something that's approved by mainstream medicine, but some studies have shown that they can slow the process of aging, helping some to live not just longer, but better. And that's what Dr. Petteruti is all about.

"Much of what ages us is modifiable." He's talking about things like sarcopenia, the muscular atrophy that naturally begins to occur in all of us between the ages of 50 and 60. "You don't lose your hormones because you get old, you get old because you lose your hormones." The body changes in natural ways, but that doesn't mean you can't slow the changes. "What drives me is the concept of living to 120 and taking youth with us."

Dr. Petteruti spent years as a traditional primary care physician, boxed into the framework of health insurance requirements and rigid regulations. After a particularly frustrating day, his wife Shannon suggested they rethink the entire practice, and they did. Several years back they rebuilt and rebranded the practice from the ground up, and last year began the IV infusions.

Now, it's an alt-health center where you can get a drip before a night of drinking to help your body process alcohol better, or perhaps even after. It's reflective of the holistic approach to the practice as a

whole: You can promote good health by way of supplying your body with the nutrients it needs, but you can also receive the substances needed to help your body fight whatever illness it might need to. That means cancer, Lyme disease, even fibromyalgia.

After a lengthy conversation with Dr. Petteruti, I settled into the Drip Bar with IV specialist Ashlee Hammerschmidt, who welcomed me with a smile and explained a bit about my particular drip. It's called the Energy Drip, packed with several different B vitamins, calcium gluconate and the real kicker: glutathione. This powerful antioxidant, while available in dark greens like broccoli and Brussel sprouts, has low bioavailability, meaning that the body can only really accept trace amounts of it into its system. But getting it injected directly into your veins? Way more effective. First-timers can get a Classic Myers Cocktail for only \$99, but most infusions hover around the \$120 to \$165 range.

Ashlee is an expert with the needle; I used to donate blood quite a bit and have been to the hospital more than once, and I have to say she is among the best I've encountered at sticking a vein. Thankfully, she warned me of a very strange little side effect: Some people begin to smell or taste things in the back of their mouth. For me, it was an aftertaste that was pungent and tinny, almost skunk-ish. Before long, I felt a pleasant little rush that lasted for a long time. I animatedly proclaimed that it felt like the peak of a caffeine buzz, but it lingered longer than the five seconds most coffee buzzes do. Energetic doesn't quite capture how good it made me feel.

"The generalized effects could last up to a full week," Ashlee explained. "Some people come in weekly for a while to really reap the benefits."

Later that day, by the early afternoon I felt a bit sleepy and cheerful, the kind of comfy, happy tired you feel when you wake up late on a Saturday morning and you still want to - and get to - sleep. Each night since then, I've had some of the best sleep I've experienced in a long time. I don't fully understand how these nutrients are affecting my body, but I have to say I can feel some definite effects.

And these effects are scientifically proven, just not widely accepted. There is a difference between alt-health and fringe health.

"This type of medicine is ready for the mainstream," Dr. Petteruti said near the end of our meeting. I'm inclined to agree. So the next time you have one too many and wake up with a throbbing headache, skip the Gatorade and greasy breakfast and head on over to the Drip Bar instead.

*The Petteruti Center for Life Extension  
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