# AIDS and the Single Girl

Looking for makeup tips, she found HIV

May 1, 1998 By Jane Czyselska

---

*Marie Claire* may be a relatively new addition to the women's magazine section of your local newsstand, but in London its glossy pages have long been a trusted source of "how to" articles about manicures, makeovers and men. Three years ago, while flipping through its perfume-scented pages, Babs Evans came across a feature on blood donors. Evans, whose government job involves handling housing, medical and other emergencies for the elderly, ill and disabled, answered the article's cry for help by donating blood.

"I felt compelled to do it," says Evans, 36. "It seemed like an easy way to help people."

At the donor center, Evans responded "no" to the routine questions designed to identify people at high risk for HIV. When asked to consent to an HIV test, she agreed, never dreaming that her phone would ring a week later with the news that she was positive. "I didn't know anyone with HIV, and I didn't meet any of the stereotypes," she says. "I mean, I was in a monogamous heterosexual relationship."

Not for long. HIV took its toll on her three-year relationship. "It was farcical," she says. "He was sharing my toothbrush and I got mad, thinking, 'If he's got HIV, it's his fault.' There was so little information that we didn't know what we could and couldn't do." Evans points out that most of the information available in Britain in 1994 wasn't geared to her. "It was either for gay men or it was telling you that you couldn't catch AIDS from a glass, which, by then, was a bit late!"

Four months later, Evans discovered Positively Women (PW), where she met other HIV positive women and got some answers to her questions. Soon she was on the other side of the therapy table, counseling newly diagnosed women. "I wanted to give something back," Evans says. "But HIV can take over your life, so I challenge the dependency culture that has sprung up through other support groups."

Evans admits that she'd like to share her life with a partner. "I do wonder if I'll meet anyone special or ever have sex again," she says. "I met an Austrian fellow who was brilliant when I told him about my status, but he wasn't my type. It was good for my self-esteem, though."

Perhaps some of Evans' fears about a lonely future stem from her newfound belief that she will indeed have a future: Recently, she joined the pension fund at work.

A recent CD4-cell dip to 187 prompted her to start drug therapy. “I hadn’t been feeling well, but I’d put that down to being busy,” Evans says, who by last year had risen through the ranks to chair of PW. Though she still remains active with the organization, offering support to her replacement, she is no longer at the helm. “It’s quite an isolating position,” Evans says.

Instead, she’s redecorating her flat. “I’m wallpapering and stripping paint,” she says. “I can’t bear to pay anybody else to do something that I can do myself.”

A ddI/d4T/nevirapine combo boosted her count to 300, with an undetectable viral load, but the side effects -- nausea, diarrhea and fatigue -- were the pits, so earlier this year she took a break from treatment. Today, her major physical concern is quite normal: Slimming down. “I’ve put on weight since I was diagnosed, as a precaution against wasting,” she says. “All the articles and leaflets for people with HIV seem to be about becoming a fat bastard.”

If it’s a fad diet she’s looking for, Evans should renew her subscription to *Marie Claire*.

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/AIDS-and-the-Single-Girl-1615-8143