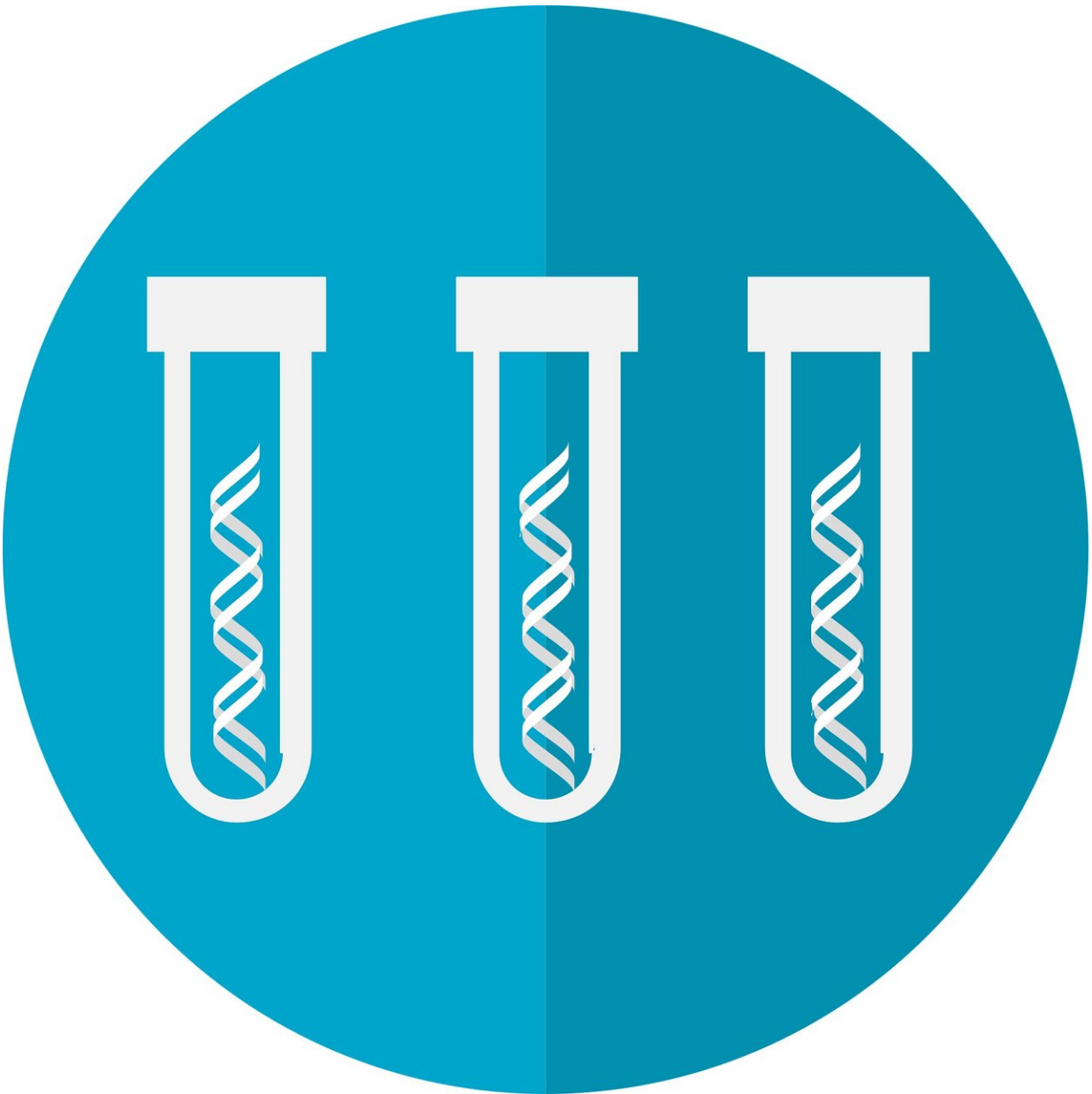


# Wellness strips with companion mobile app give users test results ASAP

October 24 2019, by Brittany Meiling

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Jon Carder is best known as the guy who co-founded three multi-million dollar internet businesses before he turned 30. He retired at 27 as an e-commerce star here in San Diego, but it was short-lived. He later co-founded Empyr and Mogl, which combined raised roughly \$100 million in startup capital.

The now 41-year-old is back at it again. But his latest startup, Bloom, is looking pretty different from past ventures.

Bloom is developing an at-home [test](#) strip that measures a person's vitamin and mineral levels, along with other wellness factors like current hydration and stress hormones. Altogether, the test strip can measure 15 health metrics to give customers a better idea of what's happening in their bodies.

Why is an e-commerce entrepreneur like Carder getting into the wellness business? He said his work-heavy lifestyle started taking a toll on his health at an early age, and that got him interested in nutrition. Once he hit 30, he began fighting brain fog, afternoon crashes and general feelings of exhaustion.

"As an entrepreneur, my [brain function](#) and [energy levels](#) determine how successful I am," Carder said. "If my brain isn't functioning at its highest level, I'm going to make bad decisions."

He sought out medical help, but his doctor told him he was perfectly healthy. So he went to see a nutritionist, who tested him for vitamin deficiencies, among other things.

"It turned out I was deficient in vitamin D, B-12 and omega-3s," Carder said. He started taking supplements and began feeling renewed within a few weeks.

Carder said he found it frustrating that it was so expensive and cumbersome to get a nutrition test done at a clinic or laboratory. So earlier this year, he left his post as CEO of Empyr to team up with 33-year-old mechanical engineer Matt McCord. Together, they founded Bloom.

At-home test strips are not a novelty—we're all familiar with existing urine tests that can measure things like pregnancy, drug use, or urinary tract infections while at home. There are even existing nutrition tests consumers can buy directly from Amazon. Buyers simply take the test at home, ship it back to the company, and get results in about 10 days.

What's different about Bloom is that their test strips can be analyzed within minutes, not days. That's because Bloom is also building a companion [mobile app](#) that reads the test strips and gives users the results ASAP. The app also gives recommendations on what to eat (or which supplements to take) based on your results.

One [test strip](#) will cost about \$20. But Carder said he's hoping people will sign up for a subscription plan, so they can continue testing while making lifestyle changes.

"It takes a while to get your levels in the right place, and you can lose them quickly," Carder said. "It's fascinating to test daily."

Details of the subscription plan costs are not yet final, but Carder said he hopes to get the per-test cost down to \$10 for subscribers.

It's important to note that this test is not FDA approved, which means

there is no outside party checking the accuracy of the product. Bloom doesn't have to get regulatory approval, because the test strips are considered a general wellness product.

Larry Friedman, a local internist and associate dean for clinical affairs at UC San Diego, said consumers should know they're taking the company at its word.

"These companies can promise whatever they want," Friedman said. "The question is—are they accurate?"

Carder said the company is considering seeking FDA approval down the road, so it can expand into other diagnostic tests like urinary tract infection tests.

For now, customers don't seem deterred. Carder said 5,000 people have joined its waitlist, meaning the company is sold out of product until the first quarter of 2020.

Carder and McCord have raised \$1.3 million in seed money to push the company forward, focusing on mobile development and lining up a good manufacturer.

"We need to be manufacturing to the point where we can launch to tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of customers," Carder said.

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