A New You in 80 Days

Cell turnover is vast and swift

The human body replaces its own cells regularly. Scientists at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, have finally pinned down the speed and extent of this “turnover.” About a third of our body mass is fluid outside of our cells, such as plasma, plus solids, such as the calcium scaffolding of bones. The remaining two thirds is made up of roughly 30 trillion human cells. About 72 percent of those, by mass, are fat and muscle, which last an average of 12 to 50 years, respectively. But we have far more, tiny cells in our blood, which live only three to 120 days, and lining our gut, which typically live less than a week. Those two groups therefore make up the giant majority of the turnover. About 330 billion cells are replaced daily, equivalent to about 1 percent of all our cells. In 80 to 100 days, 30 trillion will have replenished—the equivalent of a new you.