

Google seeks way to search bodies for disease

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The Google logo is seen during a press announcement in New York, September 2, 2012

Google is exploring a way to search inside people's bodies for early signs of deadly illnesses such as cancer or heart disease.

A Life Sciences team at the special projects Google X Lab are experimenting with having "nanoparticles" hunt for signs of medical trouble in bloodstreams and then essentially report findings to sensors people could wear.

"This is still early-stage research, but we've done a number of promising experiments, so we're going to keep going," Google said in a description of the project made public Tuesday.

Imagined applications include a test for enzymes given off by arterial plaques that are about to rupture and cause a [heart attack](#) or stroke, or a way to watch for [cancer cells](#) after surgery or chemo treatments.

Early detection is known to dramatically increase chances of successfully treating a number of life-threatening diseases.

Batches of specially crafted nanoparticles, each microscopic in size, could be swallowed in pills and then absorbed into bloodstreams where they would stick to targeted cells such as cancer.

Magnetic qualities designed into [nanoparticles](#) allow them to be drawn to worn devices and counted using non-invasive detection methods such as light or radio waves, according to Google.

If successful, the technology could "help physicians detect a disease that's starting to develop in the body," the California-based technology titan said.

Google said that it would license the technology to companies interested in using it for medically approved diagnostics.

Google Life Sciences team innovations include contact lenses that measure glucose levels in tears to allow people with diabetes to track blood sugar, and eating utensils that cancel out trembling hands caused by diseases such as Parkinsons.

Google also last year formed a company called Calico with a mission to address problems of health and aging by harnessing advanced

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