

Let's Schmooze

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a Primer on Viruses

Did you know that biological viruses are the most abundant form of organic life here on our planet Earth? Did you also know that viruses swirl around our globe on countless atmospheric currents, raining down in wild abandon on everybody and everything?

Antibiotics (antibacterials) won't help ~ they're for fighting bacteria. Biological viruses can only be fought by the host's immunity system. That fight is sometimes successful, and sometimes not successful.

The best way to fight a looming biological virus threat is by being pre-vaccinated by a really small dose of the virulent virus, so that the body can build up an immunity to a larger infection by successfully fighting the smaller dose that was deliberately given earlier. Of course, since viruses like to mutate all the time, vaccination is only partially effective.

So, what is this little nasty that we call a biological virus? It's simply a small snippet of genetic material, either of the DNA or RNA persuasion. It propagates by copying itself inside the living cells of its unwilling host, like our human bodies. It is not a form of bacteria, since a bacterium is a whole cell, while a virus is only genetic material.

On the average, a biological virus is much smaller than the size of a bacterium ~ you could fit a hundred viruses inside one bacterium. A virus can affect any time of organic material, with transmission by either air, liquid, or solid.

What could be its purpose for existence, outside of bedeviling our own lives? Perhaps, it exists to provide for ongoing genetic diversity across all life forms on Earth ~ by injecting random genetic code into various living organisms.

Who knows? Perhaps biological viruses are the "grease" that keeps the wheels of Darwin's evolution from burning out. Of course, cosmic radiation in the upper atmosphere could also be playing a part here.

If we have to continue dealing with these nasties, we may as well deal with them intelligently.

~ *'til we meet again* ~