



Viruses are not alive, and they are not dead either – they are inanimate complex organic matter. They lack any form of energy, carbon metabolism, and cannot replicate or evolve. Viruses are reproduced and evolve only within cells.

The name virus was coined from the Latin word meaning slimy liquid or poison.

Viruses are known to infect animals, plants, fungi, protozoa, archaea, and bacteria. They can actually infect other viruses, too.

There are a million virus particles per millilitre of seawater! Lined up end to end, they would stretch 200 million light years into space.

There are 100 000 virus particles in every cubic meter of indoor air.

Due to their simple structure, viruses need a host cell to move or even reproduce. Some spread through airborne, for example, through cough or sneeze. Some viruses travel through an intermediary, like a mosquito or bug, which then infects people by biting them.

It is an interesting fact that half of all human DNA originally came from viruses, which infected and embedded themselves in our ancestors' egg and sperm cells

Some viruses can alter its host behaviour. Certain types of parasitic wasps lay eggs in caterpillars, where they mature into adult wasps. The wasp eggs contain a virus, encoded in the wasp genome, which prevents the caterpillar from rejecting the eggs.

Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Antiviral drugs cannot destroy viruses, they treat the viral infection by shutting off the replication cycle. They should be prescribed by physicians

Common cold is caused by a virus called rhinovirus.

Certain types of cancers have been linked to cancer viruses. Burkitt's lymphoma, cervical cancer, liver cancer, T-cell leukaemia, and Kaposi sarcoma are examples of cancers that have been associated with different types of viral infections. The majority of viral infections, however, do not cause cancer.

**A Virus Can Remain Dormant in a Host for Years**

A retrovirus is a type of virus that contains RNA. Retroviruses have the unique ability to insert genes into human chromosomes. These special viruses have been used as important tools in scientific discovery. Scientists have patterned many techniques after retroviruses including cloning, sequencing, and some gene therapy approaches.