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Viruses on the Loose



Through carefully selected stories, the author shows you what a virus is, what it consists of, how it is transmitted and how it produces disease.

Viruses and humans have coexisted forever, so this journey covers biological evolution, our own bodies, historical events, diagnostics, global politics, genetic material, ethics and biological warfare. The book is also about vaccines, one of our most important weapons in the war against viruses. Producing vaccines is a science in itself and is based on knowledge of how viruses are constructed and produce disease.

Viruses are bred to spread and don't think twice about setting off on long journeys between continents, like travel-loving stowaways. In this book, you'll get to know different kinds of viruses: some of the most common, some that are extremely cunning and some that are so dangerous their fatality rate is close to 100%. Viruses cause contagion by travelling, just as we do, but their journey doesn't stop there. The way they produce disease inside us can be viewed as a microscopic travelogue. We shall therefore follow some viruses as they travel through our bodies to reach the cells they both hijack and harm.

If you are prepared to face up to your fear of viruses, you'll discover that knowledge of viruses is extremely helpful. In certain situations, it may help you survive and avoid sicknesses like cancer, immunodeficiency, warts, cold sores, shingles and blindness.

Eystein Hellstrøm Hoddevik

Eystein Hellstrøm Hoddevik (b. 1980) is a doctor of internal medicine and pathology, and has a doctorate in molecular biology and neuroscience. He has lived in France, Scotland, Germany and Sweden and has worked as a doctor in the navy, on ships, in the emergency room and at internal medicine departments. He is employed at the Department of Pathology, Oslo University Hospital, and teaches at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo.



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