

# *Your Health Reference Sheet*

## *Topic: Herpesviruses*

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Nobel prizewinner Peter Medawar describes herpesviruses as “pieces of bad news wrapped in protein,” and bad news they are because of the unique biological means by which they survive and thrive. Pragmatically, viruses can best be described as parasites. This is because they aren’t living organisms nor are they able to sustain themselves without help. In fact, watching the life cycle of a virus is like watching a sci-fi film where some alien invader takes over a healthy body for the purpose of its own survival. In the case of a virus, the healthy body is a cell. If a virus is to survive, it literally invades the cell and then takes it over by incorporating its own genetic coding into the genome of the cell. Once its coding becomes part of the cell, the virus sets up a replication process that makes it possible for its own genetic coding to be duplicated so quickly that it overwhelms the cell, causing the cell to die due to the sheer volume of the number of viruses it contains.

Now it doesn’t end there. On the death of an infected cell, the cell ruptures, releasing the numerous copies of the viruses to infect adjacent cells. Once these adjacent cells are infected, the life cycle of the virus begins again. Without the cell, the virus would be powerless because it doesn’t have its own mechanism for independent replication.

The problem with viruses is that they aren’t living, so that means they can’t be killed in the traditional sense with the use of antibiotics. Even though antibiotics are effective in treating bacterial infections, they’re absolutely useless when it comes to viruses. So how do you kill viruses? You starve them by keeping the body alkaline. This means avoiding sugar and simple carbohydrates. You starve them by getting adequate rest and managing stress. You starve them by releasing the negative thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and attitudes that cause the body to stay in a state of mental and emotional distress. Or, you can use antiviral drugs that prevent the virus from replicating itself in other living cells.

### **General Description**

The name herpes is derived from the ancient Greek word *herpein*, which means “to creep or crawl,” and it certainly describes the way herpes moves through the body one cell at a time. Then there’s another issue with herpes and that’s its unpredictability. When herpes first infects the body, its activities trigger an onslaught of symptoms, making the body feel like it’s being assaulted. The most common symptoms are pervasive fatigue, sore throat,