



## Unit 23 — Epidemics, Viruses, and Pandemics

### Reading: Viruses, Epidemics, and Pandemics

Viruses are strange microscopic organisms that behave unlike most other organisms we know. First, they are much smaller than even bacteria and they are not self-sufficient. Viruses need another living thing, called a host, in order to live and multiply. A virus manipulates its host's cells into creating more viruses. Thus they are thought to be mostly parasitic in nature.

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### Discussion Questions

Has there been any serious viral outbreaks since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic? What was it? How did the medical community, press, and public at large respond?

If you were a virus, what effect would you have on children, middle-aged people, and the elderly? Would you be a good virus or a bad virus? Is there even such a thing as a good virus? Explain.