Welcome back to the Department of Bodily Oddities.

God’s Odd Bod Squad (G.O.B.S.) had been pursuing a virus, but then the virus started chasing us! Yikes! We had to start wearing masks so the virus wouldn’t recognize us. Now it just thinks we’re raccoons.

Viruses have been back since before scientists identified the first one in the 1890s. The name virus comes from a Latin word meaning slimy liquid or poison, although scientists later determined that viruses are like microscopic parasites.

Viruses are too small to be seen without specialized equipment. The invention of the electron microscope in 1931 allowed scientists to see the structure of viruses for the first time.

A virus must invade the cells of another living organism, referred to as a host, in order to create more viruses. Because viruses multiply rapidly, anything that spreads superfast is said to have gone viral. Scientists use the term epidemic to refer to a disease that affects many people at the same time. If many countries around the world are battling the same disease, it’s called a pandemic.

Viruses love to hitchhike on fingers. They can travel to a person’s face where they can enter the body through the mucous membrane-lined openings of the eyes, nose and mouth. Itchiness aside, it’s a good idea to not touch your face during cold season. Another great defense is our immune system! It puts up “NO TRESPASSING” signs. If the virus ignores the sign, our immune system sends in troops, called antibodies, to disarm it.

People develop immunity either through getting the virus and recovering or by taking an effective vaccine. When enough people in an area develop immunity, this produces what is called herd immunity. The whole herd is safer because enough people within the herd have effective antibodies against the virus.

Most viral infections are subclinical. This means you never know you even have an infection because your body’s immune system fights it off before you develop any symptoms. The only way to tell is through a blood test to check for antibodies. The whole herd is safer because enough people within the herd have effective antibodies against the virus.

Scientists believe these droplets can stay suspended in the air for a couple of hours. Wearing a mask, as well as coughing and sneezing into your elbow rather than into your hand, can limit the spread of the explosion. ACHOO! Time for a new shirt:

Viruses make you tired because they steal energy produced by your cells to make more virus. Itchiness aside, it’s a good idea to not touch your face during cold season. Another great defense is our immune system! It puts up “NO TRESPASSING” signs. If the virus ignores the sign, our immune system sends in troops, called antibodies, to disarm it.

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