

Buster Virus Outline (One Page)

The Buster Virus is a Reovirus that was contained within the asteroid 3753 Cruithne, which orbits the sun and co-orbits Earth. When Cruithne collided with some orbital debris around Earth part of it broke off and ended up becoming a meteor, eventually colliding with Zenith City over the Pacific Ocean. Traces of ice were found where the break-off on Cruithne's surface occurred, suggesting the virus was in a state of preservation within the asteroid, with the possibility of more of it still dormant within. The virus is believed to have survived falling to Earth as despite the dramatic rise in heat penetrating the atmosphere the core of the resultant meteorite remained dangerously cold upon impact.

The virus itself behaves unusually as while it does still rely upon cell death to spread at a certain point the virus focuses more on replication than cell death, becoming strong enough to spread without fully consuming cells. The virus is able to be spread through simple physical contact as well as being airborne, as it is able to sustain itself in water as well as infect virtually any living creatures. The virus specifically targets immune systems and reacts aggressively towards hydrogen. Natural responses to the virus vary, but typically either a host ends up in a state of stasis, the host's body ending up little more than a nest from which the virus is able to replicate and spread itself through the air.

In very rare instances the virus causes the host body to react by absorbing it, the viral cells instead consumed through the host's immune system. The change however causes spontaneous mutation, the body forced to quickly adapt to the virus it has now absorbed. In the case of plant-life, insects and most mammals the mutation tends to result in radical physical shifts, the energy channelled into triggering growth beyond physical limits, rejuvenation and in some cases acceleration of evolutionary changes to better adapt to an environment. Humans however in particular tend to become linked to the virus, then in turn developing radical new ways of burning off the massive amounts of excessive chemical energy their body now contains.

Dr. Arthur Niven of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention encountered the virus on Zenith City and was one of the first to study it, initially protected due to being far from the viral outbreak and then able apply safety measures before the infection reached him. The name, Buster Virus, was coined by members of the Nucleic Engineering Xenobiology Taskforce (NEXT), a World Health Organization group, referring to the human mutated carriers as 'Human Busters.' Dr. Niven was able to conclude that mutated human hosts were non-infectious, later also realizing they could even be used to clear the virus out of locations by actively working to absorb it.

Within the game *Busterman* the Buster Virus would not only serve as an explanation for how the protagonist would gain their superpowers but it would also add a gameplay element. Within Zenith City there would be areas where the virus was more active, in particular where more humans in stasis were congregated. This could not only potentially force the players to try and avoid injuring the helpless humans if morality were to come into play but it would mean that the player character is actively absorbing more of the virus. As the absorption of the virus is the fuel for the character's abilities, it would also demand the player effectively be constantly abusing the abilities for fear of too much of the virus building up within their character and resulting in possible detrimental effects. Combined with a morality system where human casualties are to be avoided, this could result in demanding the player somehow use the character's abilities with reckless abandon while none the less trying to avoid accidentally hitting the source of this increased power.