

Scientists discover virus that steals CRISPR machinery from bacteria

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Viruses have often been described as the ultimate parasite, shedding all of their non-essential parts and leaving behind an extremely efficient genetic transfer apparatus. Phage viruses have evolved to infect various bacteria proficiently and hijack their replication machinery to make more viruses.

However now, researchers from the University of British Columbia (UBC) have recently described their findings surrounding a phage virus that infects major freshwater bacteria, which appears to use stolen bits of immune system DNA to hijack its host's immune response. Specifically, the investigators found that cyanophage N1 carries a CRISPR DNA sequence, which is generally used by bacteria to fight off viral infection.

“This is the first evidence we’ve seen that a virus can donate an immunity system via CRISPR,” explained senior study author and University of British Columbia virologist Curtis Suttle, Ph.D. “This is like a hacker compromising a computer system, and then immediately patching it to ensure other hackers can’t break in.”

Read full, original post: [Virus Hacks Host Genome, Steals CRISPR to Protect Itself](#)