



The New Killer Diseases: How the Alarming Evolution of Germs Threatens Us All

Elinor Levy, Mark Fischetti

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The strange new disease SARS erupted apparently out of nowhere and has spread at an astonishing rate. Scary as SARS itself is, the disease is also a warning of many possible such outbreaks to come. Featuring the disturbing story of SARS—where it came from, what it is, and how to protect yourself from it—as well as those of many other recently evolved deadly scourges, **The New Killer Diseases** is a shocking call to arms.

All around us—in our homes, workplaces, and public spaces—bacteria and viruses are evolving at a feverish rate, and our best defenses against them are in danger of being overwhelmed. The threat posed by emerging infectious diseases is as formidable as any challenge the human race has ever faced, and the evolutionary scales may be tipping in favor of the microbes.

In **The New Killer Diseases**, a respected immunologist and a veteran science author introduce the vital facts the public must know about the astonishing range of killer microbes we are up against. From the SARS and West Nile viruses to mad cow and Ebola, thirty new deadly diseases have arisen since the 1970s, and twenty old scourges, such as plague and cholera, are reemerging. But the FDA only recently approved the first new type of antibiotic in thirty-four years, and vaccines for many of the most lethal viruses are a long way from development. In addition, researchers have only lately discovered that bacteria have been swapping resistance genes—genes that help them evade the drugs meant to kill them—and are evolving new mechanisms to fight off even our best drugs at a startling pace.

Featuring many remarkable stories of people who have contracted bizarre new afflictions, including that of the doctor who first diagnosed SARS and then died from it, **The New Killer Diseases** empowers readers by revealing in a gripping, detailed fashion the way these new diseases manifest themselves, the symptoms to watch out for, and how to get a correct diagnosis in time. The book also goes to the front lines of the war being waged by researchers and medical professionals across the country, profiling the pioneers who are leading the fight and introducing the latest scientific developments, from new genetic techniques to promising drug programs, which may allow us to beat back the microbe menace.

The New Killer Diseases arms us with the knowledge to protect ourselves and our families, leaving us alert and fully informed about the troubling extent of the formidable threat we face.

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