

# WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

## Issue #8: Diseases & Medical Options



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**D**uring the final wars that destroyed the Ancients' civilization, some of the most horrifying weapons unleashed were terrible biological diseases and plagues. Such diseases were great equalizers, their viruses and bacteria striking down unlucky victims regardless of wealth, ethnicity, or homeland.

Although the *Mutant Future* core book touches on optional rules regarding diseases and their effects, this issue will provide Mutant Lords with a wider range of possibilities. These additions expand the Constitution Table, include healing rates and negative hit points, and provide simple but effective rules covering mutants using the Ancients' drugs and medical equipment. Several new types of disease — both infectious and mutagenic — are also introduced, as well as detailed rules covering symptoms and a new type of saving throw. In short, everything a ML needs to make player characters' lives that much more "interesting."

The table below adds to the *Mutant Future* core book's Constitution Table, providing information for scores up to 30 and including the optional rule covering daily healing. The ML can easily modify this table to incorporate even higher Constitution scores.

### Modified Constitution Table

| Score | Poison & Disease Saving Throw Adjustment | Radiation Saving Throw Adjustment | Bonus to Daily Healing |
|-------|--|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 3     | -2                                       | -3                                | 0                      |
| 4-5   | -1                                       | -2                                | 0                      |
| 6-8   | 0  | -1                                | 0                      |
| 9-12  | 0  | 0                                 | 0                      |
| 13-15 | 0  | 0                                 | +1                     |
| 16-17 | 0  | 0                                 | +2                     |
| 18    | 0  | 0                                 | +3                     |
| 19    | +1                                       | 0                                 | +4                     |
| 20    | +2                                       | +1                                | +5                     |
| 21    | +3                                       | +2                                | +5                     |
| 22-23 | +4                                       | +3                                | +6                     |
| 24-25 | +5                                       | +4                                | +7                     |
| 26-27 | +6                                       | +5                                | +8                     |
| 28-29 | +7                                       | +6                                | +9                     |
| 30    | +8                                       | +7                                | +10                    |



### Rules Option: Negative Hit Points

Rather than dying when reaching 0 hit points, a character is instead near death and continues to lose one hit point per round until reaching a negative value equal to his Constitution, at which point he is irrevocably dead (unless brought back by certain artifacts). A character with a Constitution of 14, for example, will die at -14 hit points.

Every turn a character with 0 or fewer hit points must also save versus stun to remain conscious. If successful, the character may attempt to stabilize himself or have another do it for him. This can be done using medical devices, drugs, first aid, or even a mutation that promotes healing. If the save fails, the character falls unconscious, cannot act, and will remain comatose until healed back up to one or more hit points.

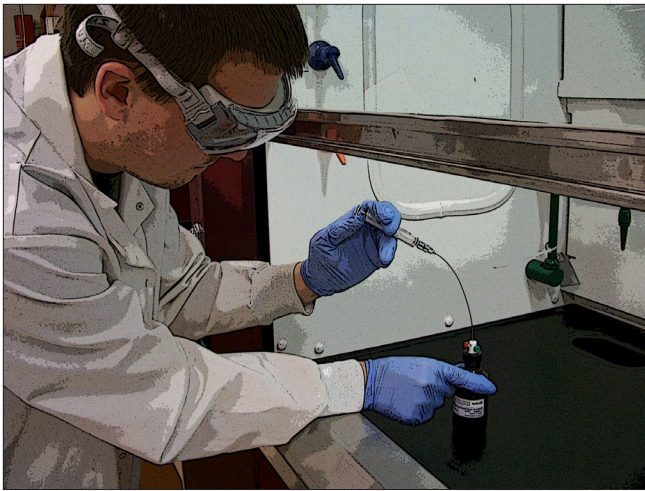
### Rules Option: Bonus to Daily Healing

While resting, characters with higher Constitution scores will heal at a greater rate than others with this rules option (the amount is shown on the Modified Constitution Table, above).

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This publication is dedicated to providing useful information, game content, and ideas to players of modern, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic table-top and role-playing games in general and to fans of Goblinoid Games' *Mutant Future* RPG in particular. The material contained herein are compatible with it and any others that use the "Basic" system introduced in the most popular role-playing games of the early 1970s and are easily adaptable to many other games (especially successor systems, to include those covered by the Open Game License).



Rather than heal just the normal 1d3 hit points per day of rest, for example, a character with a Constitution of 16-17 will heal 1d3+2 hit points.

### Rules Option: Medical Compatibility

Before the final wars, all manner of near-miraculous medicines existed and were designed to work specifically with normal human physiology and bio-chemistry. However, the war altered life across the spectrum, with weapons unleashing nuclear, biological, chemical, and nanite mutagens. Survivors soon realized that even seemingly minor changes to the genome were sometimes enough to prevent pre-war treatments from working, or to cause them to have unforeseen side effects.

The Genotype Medical Compatibility Table details the chance pre-war medicine will work on characters with mutations of any sort (physical, mental, defect, or plant), including those new races presented in *Wisdom from the Wastelands Issue #4: New Races*. See the description below the table for items marked with an asterisk (\*).

### Genotype Medical Compatibility Table

| Genotype       | Treatment Effective on 2d6 |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Ancients       | Always                     |
| Aquatics       | 2-10                       |
| Body Masters   | -1 Per Mutation*           |
| Exotics        | 2-10                       |
| Humans         | Always (until mutated)     |
| Insectoids     | Never                      |
| Mental Masters | -1 Per Mutation*           |
| Mutant Animal  | 2-6, and -1 Per Mutation*  |
| Mutant Human   | -1 Per Mutation*           |
| Mutant Plant   | Never                      |
| Pure Human     | Always                     |

To determine if a drug or device works, consult the table and roll 2d6 (if applicable). For example, a mutant human with two mutations will benefit from pre-war medicine on a roll of 10 or less, whereas for a mutant human with eight mutations drugs will only work on a roll of four or less. Although considered pure humans, aquatics and exotics have

a slight chance that a drug will not work correctly on them, and they always have to check on the medical compatibility table.

Unless they are of a veterinary type (determined by the ML), pre-war drugs will only work on mutant animals with a roll of six or less, -1 for every mutation the animal possesses. In other words, if a mutant animal has more than four mutations the drugs will always fail. This includes mutant animals that have taken on humanoid physiologies.

These treatments have no effect on androids, synthetics, or replicants of any type, and always fail on mutant plants and insectoids.

If the compatibility check fails, even in cases where this is automatic, roll percentile dice and consult the table below:

### Medical Incompatibility Table

| Roll d00 | Effect   |
|----------|--|
| 01-25    | Drug works with half usual effect.   |
| 26-50    | No effect, drug is wasted.   |
| 51-70    | Acts as mild poison (class 2).   |
| 71-80    | Acts as medium strength poison (class 4).                                    |
| 81-90    | Acts as strong poison (class 8).   |
| 91-93    | Causes permanent physical damage.  |
| 94-96    | Reduce one physical statistic by 1d3.  |
| 97-98    | Causes permanent mental damage. Reduce one mental statistic by 1d3.          |
| 99-98    | Drug causes genetic damage to the mutant. Lose one randomly chosen mutation. |
| 99-00    | Death.   |

### Disease Symptoms

Many of the symptoms described in the *Mutant Future* core book are merely cosmetic and do not have any game rules *per se*. Inventive MLs, however, could come up with their own rules for symptoms or use the rules provided here.

Note that some diseases will have multiple symptoms that often have the same penalties (e.g., a victim might have a disease that causes headaches and audible ringing), but that these do not stack! The ML simply imposes the more severe penalty on the victim.

**Audible Ringing:** The victim suffers from tinnitus. This can be mildly distracting or downright maddening, depending on the severity. As a result, the victim suffers -1 to -4 to Willpower and all mental attacks are made with a



corresponding -1 to -4 to hit. The ML could also assign a -5% to -20% penalty for figuring out and repairing artifacts and a -1 to -2 penalty to surprise checks, due to the distraction this condition imposes on the victim.

**Blurred Vision:** The disease directly effects the optic nerves. As a result, the victim has penalties of -1 to hit in melee combat and +1 to Armor Class when defending. Ranged attacks are made at -2 to hit. The ML can also assign a penalty of -1 to surprise checks.

**Fatigue:** Certain diseases leave a victim tired. This can be mild or completely debilitating, and will persist until the underlying disease is cured.

### Fatigue Table

| <i>Fatigue Level</i> | <i>Modifiers</i>  |
|----------------------|---|
| Light                | -1 to hit, -25% movement.   |
| Moderate             | -2 to hit, -50% movement.   |
| Heavy                | -3 to hit, -75% movement, save versus stun every round of combat or strenuous activity or fall unconscious. |

**Headaches:** This symptom can range from mild to extreme, with the corresponding modifiers detailed in the table below. In extreme cases, the victim must make a saving throw versus stun for every round of combat or every turn of strenuous activity and, failing it, fall unconscious for 1d6 minutes.

### Headache Table

| <i>Headache Severity</i> | <i>Modifiers</i>  |
|--------------------------|---|
| Mild                     | -1 to INT and WIL, -25% movement, -1 to hit, +1 to AC, -10% to figure out/repair artifacts. |
| Moderate                 | -2 to INT and WIL, -50% movement, -2 to hit, +2 to AC, -20% to figure out/repair artifacts. |
| Extreme                  | -3 to INT and WIL, -75% movement, -3 to hit, +3 to AC, -30% to figure out/repair artifacts. |

**Inflammation:** Many diseases cause portions of the body to become red, swollen, and painful. For the duration of the disease, the ML will have to decide where the inflammation occurs.

### Inflammation Table

| <i>Extent</i> | <i>Modifier</i>  |
|---------------|--|
| Entire body   | Lose all Dexterity bonuses to AC, suffer -25% to movement rate, and incur a Dexterity penalty of -1 to -4. |
| One arm       | -2 to hit, and gain no bonus from using a shield.  |
| Both arms     | Cannot hold an item (ML discretion).   |
| One leg       | -25% to movement.  |
| Both legs     | -75% to movement, if using a leg to attack -2 to hit.  |



Body-wide inflammation will cause the victim to lose all Dexterity bonuses to AC, suffer a -25% penalty to movement, and incur a Dexterity penalty of -1 to -4. With one arm affected, the victim will suffer -2 to hit and gain no bonus from using a shield. If both arms are inflamed, the character may not be able to hold an item. This is left to the discretion of the ML. A victim with one affected leg will suffer a -25% movement rate penalty. Both legs will cause the victim to lose 75% of the movement rate. If the victim uses a leg to attack, the ML can impose a -2 penalty to hit as well.

**Irritated:** This is a physical response to various irritants and can range from itchy surface rashes to distracting deep muscle twitches. Until the condition is removed, the sufferer will have -2 to hit, -2 to AC, -2 to saving throws, movement rate reduced by 25%, and a -10% penalty when attempting to figure out or repair artifacts. If the irritation is due to itching, the victim must also make a save versus stun once per day or suffer 1d3 points of damage from constant scratching. The damage could be worse if the victim has natural weapons such as claws (ML's discretion).

**Lesions or Pustules:** These pus-filled blisters cause social discomfort and physical hardship. First, they reduce a sufferer's Charisma by 1d4. Second, whenever the victim is struck or touched during melee combat, there is a chance one of the lesions or pustules will be hit. The ML secretly determines what percentage of the character's body is affected and then rolls percentile dice. If the result is under the predetermined percentage, the victim suffers an additional 1d3 points of damage and the attacker must make a saving throw versus poison (or disease, if the optional save is used) or become infected by the disease the victim suffers from.

**Pain:** This could be anything from general joint aches to incapacitating agony and the ML will have final say about the victim's level of pain. Movement can be reduced by 25% to 75% based on the severity, and in extreme cases the victim must also succeed at a saving throw versus stun for every round of combat or every turn of strenuous activity or fall unconscious for 1d6 minutes. The victim will also suffer an overall penalty of -1 to -4 to all attacks, AC, and saving throws — once again, depending on the intensity of the pain.

**Nauseated:** A nauseated character will be incapable of engaging in strenuous physical action. First, his movement



rate will be reduced by 50% and any saving throws the character must make will be at -2. Nauseated characters can still attempt to defend themselves against physical attack, but will suffer a -4 penalty to hit and lose any AC bonus provided by Dexterity. On top of this, the character's normal Dexterity score will be reduced by 4. The victim can still defend normally against mental attacks but will not be able to initiate any mental attack or maintain any mental mutations that require concentration until the state of nausea has passed.

**Vertigo:** This is very debilitating, as the victim's dizziness makes it difficult to even stand or concentrate. When in this condition, a character may move at only 25% of his regular movement rate. If the character tries to go faster, the ML will randomly determine the direction moved. For every round the sufferer attempts to move his full movement he must make a saving throw against stun or fall prone. While dizzy, the character will not be able to climb, will suffer a -4 to all attack rolls, and will gain no Dexterity bonus to AC. Any mental attacks are considered to be at -4 to Willpower for both attacking and defending. Lastly, if the victim can fly, doing so while suffering from this symptom will be impossible.

**Weakness:** As a result of the disease, the character's physical Strength is reduced by -1 to -4 (unless the disease in question already affects the victim's Strength). The total reduction is left up to the ML and, once the disease has passed, the Strength will return at a rate equal to the character's natural healing rate.

## New Diseases

Following are five new diseases for MLs to use in their games.

### Blood Melt

Save Modifier: -2  
Infection Duration: 2 weeks  
Affected Stats: Constitution -3  
Damage per day: 1d8

This horrific disease turns the victim's blood into acid, which slowly and painfully destroys the body. Blood melt is first noticed when the eyes and skin turn red, and then the victim starts to sweat blood. If killed by the disease, the victim's entire body — flesh and bones — turns into a viscous puddle of blood. This puddle will remain for 1d6 days and anything coming within 20 feet must successfully save versus poison (or disease) or become infected.

**Symptoms:** Pain, weakness, the skin and eyes turn blood red.

### Rhino's Curse

Save Modifier: +2  
Infection Duration: 1 month  
Affected Stats: Dexterity, see below, Charisma -2  
Damage per day: 1d3

Rhino's Curse causes the flesh to grow at an unnatural rate, becoming exceedingly thick with a rough texture. The victim loses one point of Dexterity per week afflicted (to a maximum

loss of -6), and gains the *natural armor (moderate)* mutation. Once the disease has been eliminated, the victim must then make another save versus poison (or disease). If successful, all Dexterity lost is regained and the *natural armor* mutation is removed. If the save fails, the victim only recovers half the total Dexterity lost, rounding up (e.g., if the loss was -4, then the victim recovers two points), and retains the *natural armor (moderate)*.

**Symptoms:** Fatigue, inflammation, irritated (the hardening skin itches fiercely.)

### Ghost Flesh

Save Modifier: +0  
Infection Duration: 1 week  
Affected Stats: Charisma -2  
Damage per day: 1d3

This is a strange disease that causes the flesh to become transparent. Wasteland scholars speculate that it was originally a bio-engineered medical treatment used to diagnose internal injuries but that the vector got loose, thrived, and mutated during the cataclysm. Now, those infected discover their flesh becomes translucent while the disease runs its course. Once cured, the victim must again save versus poison (or disease). If the save fails, the victim permanently gains the *transparent skin* drawback (see below).

**Symptoms:** Irritated, fatigue (light), and the victim gains the *transparent skin* mutation.

### Predator's Gift

Save Modifier: +1  
Infection Duration: 4 days  
Affected Stats: Dexterity -2  
Damage per day: 1d6



Some carnivores carry a debilitating biological agent on their natural weapons. When wounded by such a predator, the injured character must save versus poison (or disease) or contract the Predator's Gift. This disease weakens the victim and allows the hunter to later track down and finish off its prey. The wound becomes inflamed and the victim gives off a strong odor that will attract other predators. For the duration of the disease, the victim gains the *prey scent* drawback. Once the infection is shaken off, the victim suffers no further effects.

**Symptoms:** *Weakness (moderate), inflammation (of the wounded area).*

### Rage

Save Modifier: -2

Infection Duration: 1 day

Affected Stats: Intelligence and Willpower -2

Damage per day: 1d8

There are those who believe this disease is an artifact left over from the apocalypse. Anyone infected will almost immediately begin to suffer from moderate headaches and blurred vision and 1d3 hours later will become very moody and prone to violence. Whenever stressed or in combat, the victim must make a saving throw versus stun or immediately attack the nearest creature (friend or foe) using only natural weapons. The victim is allowed a new save every round to break the effects. Anyone wounded by a Rage carrier must save versus poison (or disease) or become infected as well.

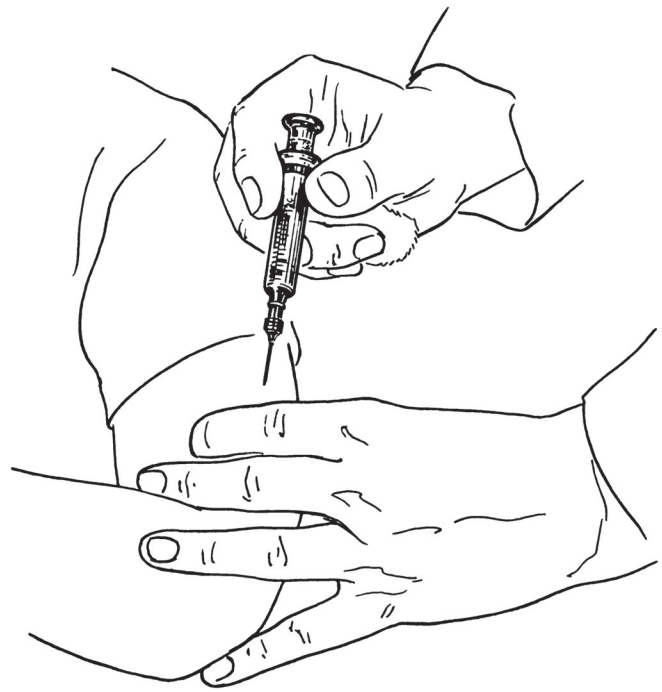
**Symptoms:** *Blurred vision, headache (moderate), foaming at the mouth.*

### New Medicine

Following are two new types of medicine that the ML to incorporate into his campaign. Even though the game already has a *Filter-Dose* drug, the following can be used as cheaper and more readily-available treatments.

**Tailored Cure:** Before the end of civilization, most diseases had been cured. But, for some reason medical science could not determine, it was simply impossible to eradicate illness completely. As a result, a technique was developed so that once a disease was diagnosed — and in the database — doctors could prescribe a specifically-designed injection that would reverse any damage and cure the patient completely. The drawback was that this type of tailored cure had no effect against any disease it was not designed to eliminate. Although very similar to the *Filter-Dose*, the *Tailored Cure* technique was far more commonly used in the poorer nations of the world because it was cheaper and easier to produce.

**Universal Antibody Booster:** A powerful concoction of various antibiotics and other drugs, this treatment was very commonly prescribed for illnesses before the final wars. After ingesting the drug, the user is immediately allowed another saving throw with +4 to the roll. If successful, the patient is cured and will not suffer any of the disease's effects. This



drug is very similar to the *Filter-Dose* but not as effective. It was far more commonly used in the poorer nations of the world because it was cheaper and easier to produce.

### New Physical Mutation

The following drawback can be used like any other or in conjunction with the Ghost Flesh disease described above.

#### Transparent Skin (D)

The mutant's epidermis is completely transparent, making its internal structure clearly visible. Most creatures find the mutant quite horrifying to look at, and it suffers almost universally a +4 penalty to reaction rolls. This condition also renders the mutant more sensitive to light-based weapons, including lasers, which inflict double damage. Although the mutant can cover its body with makeup to negate the social reaction, it still suffers the increased damage from light-based weapons. Despite these disadvantages, the mutation is helpful to anyone treating the mutant for injuries, since the medic gains a bonus to healing or applying first aid. How much of a bonus is left to the ML.

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