

DICE TOWER ESSENTIALS

RULEBOOK

MESAboardgames®

Arcane Wonders

VIRAL

A game for 2 to 5 Viruses, incubating for 60 to 90 minutes.

INTRODUCTION

You are a Virus that has just infected a Patient. Now you must spread out and mutate in order to infect other Organs. Your goal is to gain Viral Points by creating a Crisis in the Organs and by controlling Zones in the Patient's body. But watch out for the other Viruses—controlled by the other players—and the Patient's powerful Immune System!

WINNING THE GAME

Players earn Viral Points ("VPs") by infecting the various Organs and Zones in the Patient's body. The player with the most Viral Points after six rounds is the winner!

MESAboardgames would like to thank the entire team of ARCANE WONDERS for the way they have received and appreciated this project. A special thank you to Bryan Pope for all the suggestions that helped to take this game to a higher level. Working with you was excellent!

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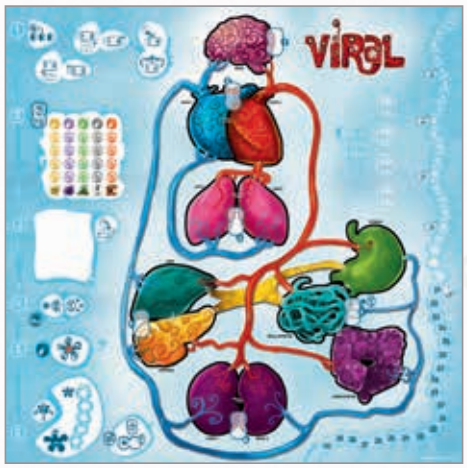
Game components

This rulebook

1 Game board



First Player Marker

1 Step marker

40 Virus tiles
(8 for each player)

Shield face



Front face



8 Zone tiles



4 Crisis tiles



5 Player boards (one for each player)



5 Tie-Breaker tokens (1 for each player)



5 Scoring tokens (1 for each player)

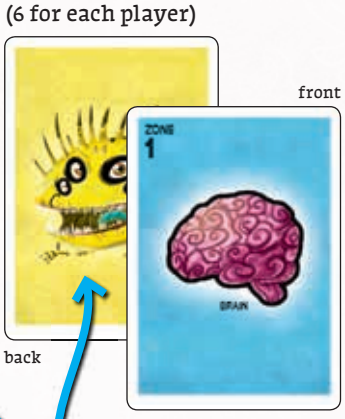


5 Research tokens (1 for each player)

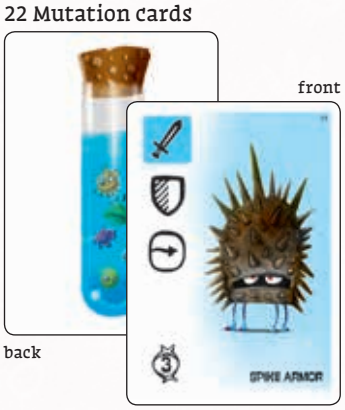
25 Starting Mutation cards
(5 for each player)



30 Zone cards
(6 for each player)



22 Mutation cards



13 Event cards



This small Virus symbol shows that this is a Starting Mutation card and which Virus it belongs to.

The backs of the Zone cards show which Virus they belong to.

The Board - Zones and Organs

The game board shows a number of the Patient's organs, divided into six different Zones, shown to the right. Each Zone has one, two, or three Organs.

Zone 2
Two organs:
Heart 1
+
Heart 2

Zone 3
Two organs:
Lung 1
+
Lung 2

Zone 4
Two organs:
Liver
+
Pancreas

Zone 6
Two organs:
Kidney 1
+
Kidney 2



Zone 1
One organ:
Brain

Zone 5
Three organs:
Stomach
+
Small Intestine
+
Large Intestine

Setting Up the Game (for a 2 player game, see page 13)

Place the game board in the middle of the table, and set up the other components as shown in the picture on the next page. Each player chooses a Virus (color) and takes:

1. 1 player board
2. 6 Zone cards (with your Virus on the back)
3. 5 Starting Mutation cards (with your small Virus symbol on the front)

Return any unused player boards, Zone cards, and Starting Mutations to the box.



4. Each player takes the number of Virus tiles shown on the table to the right, based on the number of players in the game. Place your Virus tiles on your player board with the Shield side down. Return any unused Virus tiles to the box.

Number of players	Number of Virus tiles for each player
2	8
3	
4	7
5	6



5. Choose the First Player randomly.



The first player takes the First Player marker, and places their Tie-Breaker token on the top space of the Tie-Breaker Table.
The other players place their Tie-Breaker tokens on the table in turn order (going to the left), with the last player's token in the lowest position.

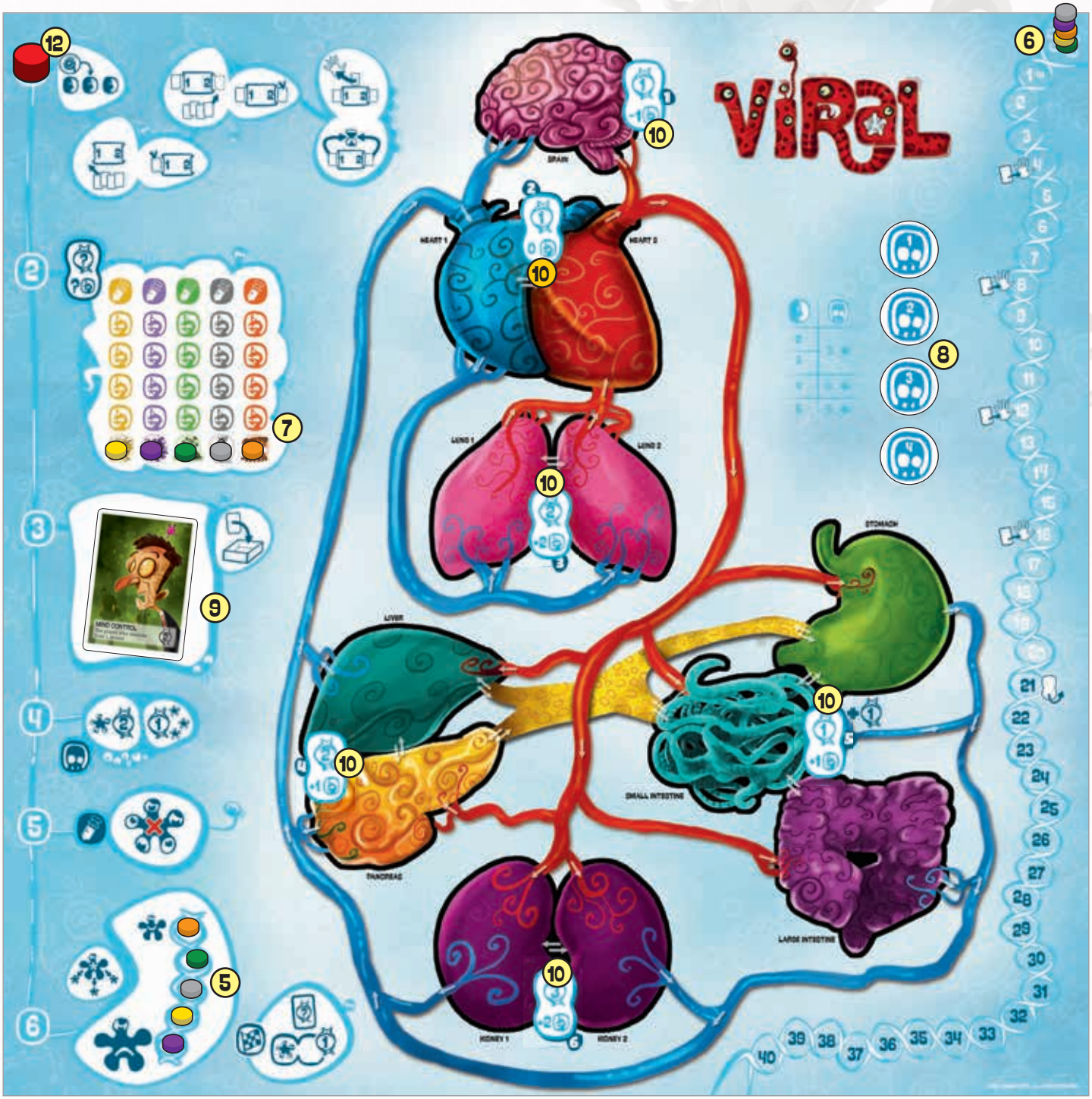
Starting with the LAST player, and going counter-clockwise (to the right), each player places one Virus (front side up) in any one Organ. Players continue taking turns placing Viruses until all Organs have one Virus each. There are two limitations:
1. Each Organ can only have one Virus.
2. A player cannot place a Virus in any Zone that already has one of their Viruses in it. Exception: A player may place another Virus in a Zone if there are no other Organs available to place their Virus in.

6. Each player places their Scoring token on the top of the Viral Point Track.

7. Each player places their Research token on the bottom space of the Research Chart that matches their color (the space with the picture of the Virus).

8. Place the four Crisis tiles, in order, on the matching spaces of the Crisis Area.

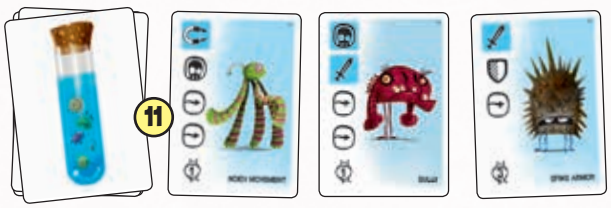




9 Shuffle the Event cards (face down) and choose 6 at random. Place them in a pile (face up) on the Event space of the game board. Return the rest to the box (without looking at them).

10 Choose six Zone tiles at random, and place one in each of the six Zones, with the white side up.

11 Shuffle all the Mutation cards, and place them in a face down deck near the board. Turn over the top three cards, and place them in a row next to the deck.



12 Place the Step marker in Step#1 on the board. You are ready to play!

Playing the Game

Viral is played over six rounds. Each round is divided into six steps, which are played in order. You can track the current step by moving the Step marker from step to step on the game board. After Step 6, move the Step marker back to Step 1.
The game ends after Round 6, once Step 6 is finished.

Before explaining the rules of each step (starting on page 7), let's look at five important general rules:

Placing a Crisis Tile on an Organ



If an Organ has too many Viruses in it, it goes into Crisis. The number of Viruses required depends on the number of players (see chart to right).

Number of players	Number of Viruses in an Organ to Trigger Crisis
2	3
3	
4	4
5	5

If an Organ goes into Crisis, take the lowest numbered Crisis tile available from the Crisis Area and place it on that Organ. The Crisis tile remains there, even if some or all of the Viruses move away, until it is resolved in Step 4.

- If there is already a Crisis tile on a Organ, do not place another one.
- If there are no more Crisis tiles available, do not place one — that Crisis does not happen.



Example in a 4-player game.

Tie-Breakers: During the Game and at the End of the Game



TIES DURING THE GAME
Any ties during the game are resolved according to the Tie-Breaker Table: The highest Virus wins!

END GAME TIE
If there is a tie at the end of the game, the tied player in the lowest position on the Tie-Breaker Table wins!

Scoring and Gaining Mutation Cards

Each time a player earns VPs, they immediately record those points on the Scoring Track by moving their token up the track. If more than one player scores VPs at the same time, move their Scoring tokens in turn order, starting with the First Player.



If a player's Scoring token reaches or passes a space with the Mutation Card Symbol, that player must immediately choose one Mutation card to add to their hand. You may choose one of the three face-up Mutation cards or take the top card from the deck.



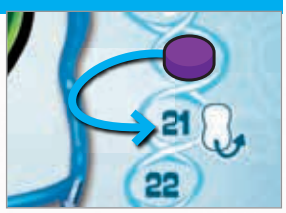
If you take a face-up card, replace it from the deck. If you take the top card from the deck, you must take all three face-up Mutation cards and place them at the bottom of the deck, then replace them with three new Mutation cards from the top of the deck.

Each player may gain a maximum of four Mutation cards during the game.

Flipping Zone Tiles

As soon the first Scoring token reaches or exceeds 21 VP, immediately flip all the Zone tiles on the board so the higher-value blue side is up.







Before reaching 21 VP.



After the first player exceeds 20 VP.

Removing Viruses

If a rule or effect says REMOVE, it means to remove the Virus from the board and return it to the player that controls it.

THE GAME ROUND - STEP #1

Play your cards right to do your best with your Virus!





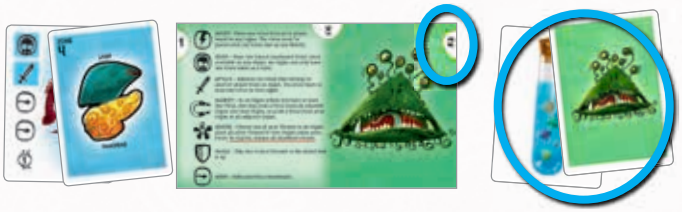
- Give the first player marker to the next player (clockwise order). Ignore this in the 1st round.

All players must simultaneously and secretly choose one Zone card and one Mutation card from their hands and place them face down to the left of their player boards—next to the number "1".



Then, all players reveal their cards. Starting with the First Player and going to the left, each player resolves their cards (see right).

Once all players have had their turn, all players do the same thing with a second pair of cards, but now next to the number "2": secretly choose cards, reveal the cards, then take turns resolving them, starting with the First Player.



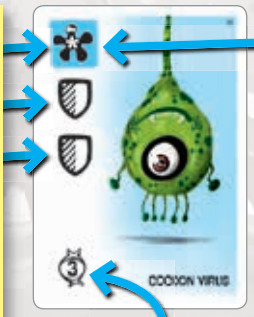
MUTATION CARDS AND ZONE CARDS

All Mutation cards show one or more Action Symbols. Each symbol allows you to take that action once.

You can take your actions in any order you choose.

You do not have to use all of your actions: you can take all, some, or none of the actions shown on your card.

The actions are explained on pages 11 and 12.

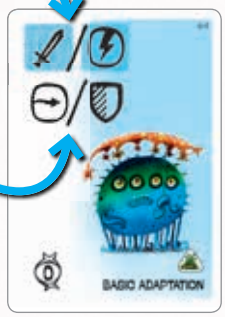


If an Action Symbol is in a blue box, you can only use that action in the Zone shown on the Zone card you played.

Some Mutation cards are worth VPs at the end of the game!



If a card has two Action Symbols separated by a slash, it means "or": You can only choose one of those two actions.

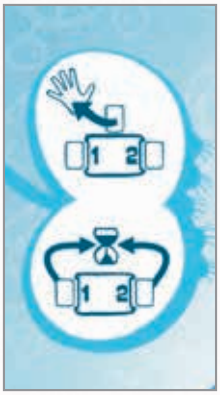


CLEANUP

At the end of Step 1, all players must do a little cleanup:

1.

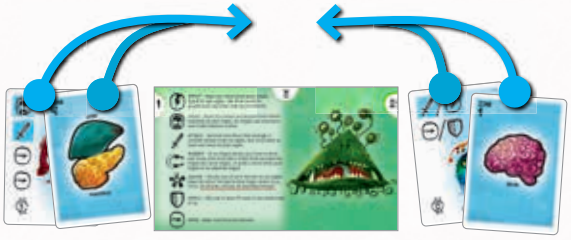
Retrieve your cards from the "Timer" space (above your player board) and add them to your hand.
Note that there won't be any cards here in Round 1.





2.

Move the two pairs of cards you played this round to your Timer space, face up.
These cards cannot be used in the next round!



THE GAME ROUND - STEP #2 - RESEARCH

The doctors want to save the Patient by researching the diseases and applying treatments.



First, determine which player controls each Zone and award VPs:

To control a Zone, you must have at least one Virus in every Organ in that Zone.

If more than one player has a Virus in every Organ, the one with the most total Viruses in that Zone controls it. If they're tied, use the Tie-Breaker Table (see page 6).

If no player controls a Zone, it doesn't award any VPs.



Score the Zones in order by Zone Number.

The player who controls a Zone MUST:

Gain the VPs shown on the Zone tile.

Slide their Research token up on the Research Chart (or down if there is a minus symbol) the number of spaces shown on the Zone tile.



In Zone 5, the controlling player earns one additional VP.

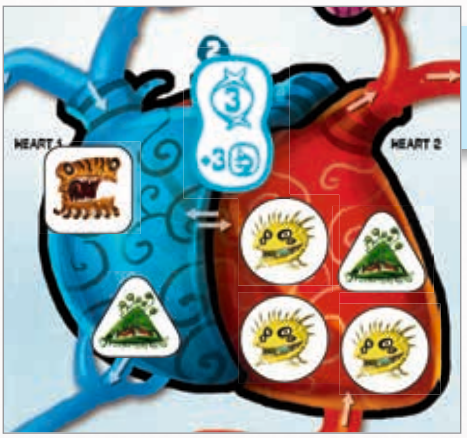
In this example, the player scores 5 VP = 4 + 1.



If your Research token is on the top space and can't go higher when you're supposed to move it up, it does not move. You still score any VPs you are entitled to.

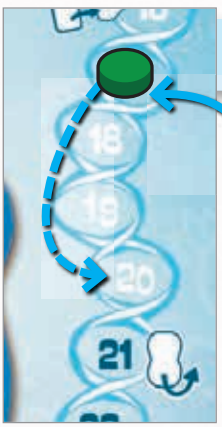
If your Research token is on the bottom space and can't go lower when you're supposed to move it down, it does not move. You still score any VPs you are entitled to.

Controlling a zone



In this example, the green Virus controls Zone 2: it's the only Virus in every Organ there.

Even though there are more yellow Viruses in the zone, the green Virus controls the zone because there aren't any yellow Viruses in the Heart 1 organ.

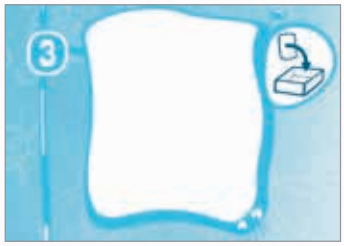


The green Virus player scores 3 VP...

...and slides up 3 spaces on the Research Chart.



THE GAME ROUND - STEP #3 - EVENT



The progression of every disease can be unpredictable, with events that can change everything!

Follow the instructions on the top Event card. (The Event card effects are explained on page 14 and 15).

Then, discard that Event card from the game (do not use it again).

Note:
When you discard the last Event card, it will remind you that you're playing the last round of the game!

THE GAME ROUND - STEP #4 - IMMUNE RESPONSE



The Patient's Immune System is going to do everything it can to stop the spread of the Viruses. Too many Viruses in an Organ will trigger a Crisis, which will activate the Immune System to remove those Viruses.

Resolve the Crisis tokens in order by the numbers on the tokens.

If there are no Viruses in an Organ with the current Crisis token, return the token to the Crisis Area. There is no other effect in that Organ.

If there are Viruses in the Organ, follow these two steps:

1. The player with the most Viruses there scores 2 VP.
   Each of the other players there scores 1 VP.

2. Remove all the Viruses from that Organ, (unless they have a shield—see page 11) and return the Crisis token to the Crisis Area.

Remember: In case of a tie, refer to the Tie-Breaker Table.

After a Crisis is resolved, return the Crisis token to the Crisis Area, where it becomes available. And, if an Organ has enough Viruses in it to trigger a Crisis, place a Crisis tile on that Organ ,but do not resolve that Crisis now. That Crisis will be resolved during Step 4 of the next round.

If more than one Organ is in Crisis, the First Player decides which Organs receive Crisis tiles first.

It is possible, but rare, that even after resolving a Crisis there will still be enough Viruses in the Organ to trigger another Crisis (from Shield abilities, for instance). If this occurs, return the Crisis tile to that Organ, but do not resolve that Crisis until Step 4 of the next round.

Resolving a Crisis



In this example, Kidney 2 has a Crisis tile.

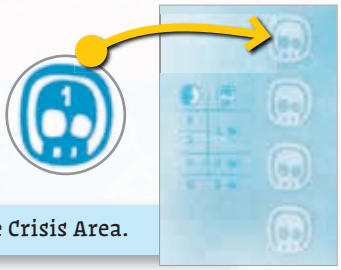
The yellow and orange Viruses are tied here, but the yellow token is higher on the Tie-Breaker Table, so the yellow player wins the tie.



The yellow Virus wins here and scores 2 VP.

Green and orange are also present, so they each get 1 VP.

After scoring, all five Viruses are removed from the Organ and...



... the Crisis tile is removed to the to the Crisis Area.

THE GAME ROUND - STEP #5 - CURES



If the doctors can find a cure for a Virus, they will use it to cleanse that Virus from the Patient!

If a player's Research token is on the top space of the Research Chart, it means that a cure for that Virus has been found.



That player must remove all of their Viruses from the board (except for those with a Shield—see page 11).

Then, return their Research token to the bottom space of the Research Chart (the space with the picture of the Virus).



The violet player has reached the top of the Research Chart.

All of her Viruses (without shield) are removed from the board.

Then, the violet Research token is moved to the bottom of the chart.

THE GAME ROUND - STEP #6 - ROUND ENDS



Which Virus is going to win in case of a tie? Let's update the Tie-Breaker Table to find out!

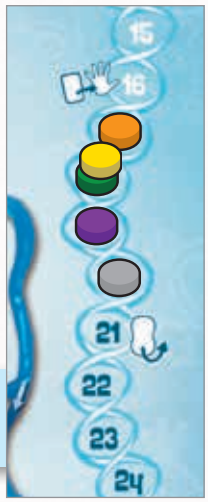
Change the Tie-Breaker tokens so they match the order on the Scoring Track:
The player with the most VPs places their token on the lowest space of the Tie-Breaker Table, followed by the player with the second-most VPs, and so on, until the player with the lowest score places their Tie-Breaker token on the highest space. Players who are tied for points on the Scoring Track keep their same relative positions on the Tie-Breaker Table as before.



Finally, release all Viruses that were absorbed (please see page 12).



The Tie-Breaker Table looked like this at the beginning of Step 6...



... and the Scoring Track was like this.





To update the Tie-Breaker Table according to the new score...

... the grey token must move to the lowest position...

... violet goes to the second lowest...

... yellow and green are tied, so they keep the same positions between them...

... and orange goes on the highest position. In the next round, the orange Virus will have the advantage in case of a tie.

If there are no more Event cards, the game ends immediately! See page 13 for how to score at the end of the game.

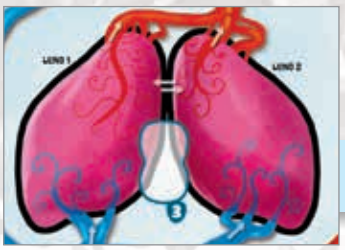
• If there are still Event cards, the Step marker is placed in Step #1. A new Round begins.

THE ACTIONS DESCRIBED – SHIELD + MOVE

SHIELD
Flip one of your Viruses so the Shield side is up.
A Shield protects a Virus from being removed once. If a rule states that the Virus must be removed, do not remove it. Instead, flip the token back over (losing the Shield). This could happen when resolving a Crisis (Step 4), during a Cure (Step 5), when another player uses against you, or during some Events.

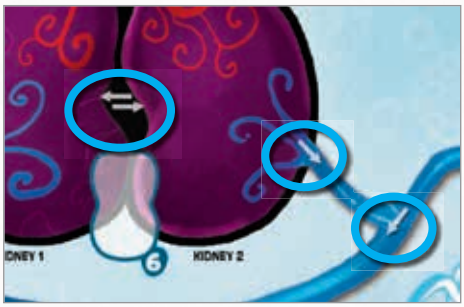
MOVE
Make one movement. Move one Virus from one Organ to another. The Virus can move:

- From its current Organ to an adjacent Organ;
or
- By following the stream in an artery or vein (in the direction of the arrows) to the next Organ along that channel.



An Organ is adjacent to another Organ if they touch each other.

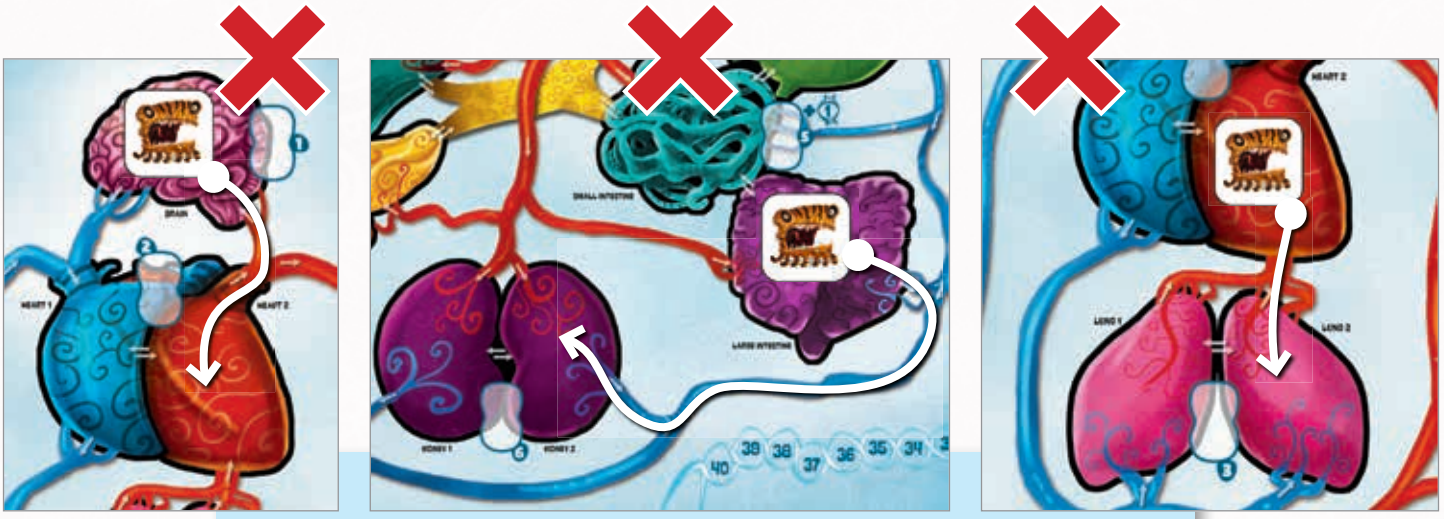
Lung 1 is adjacent to Lung 2.



Movement must always follow the directions of the arrows.
A Virus can never move against the direction of the arrows.
Two arrows together show that Viruses can move in both directions.



The yellow channel allows a Virus to move between four Organs: Liver + Pancreas + Stomach + Small Intestine.
A Virus cannot "jump" from the red artery to the yellow channel or the other way around.



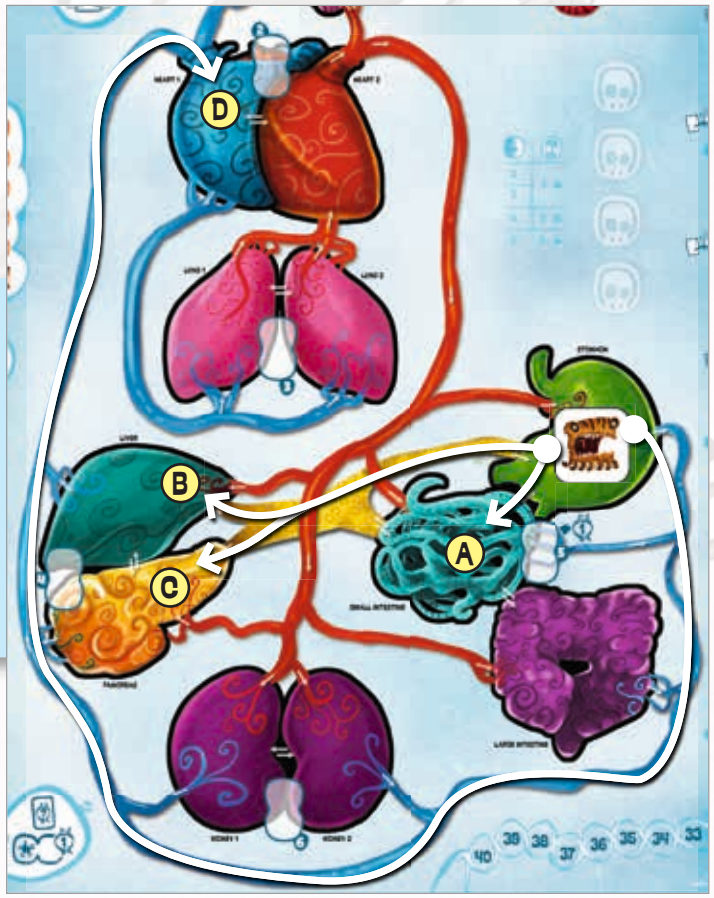
Three examples of one movement that is not allowed.

Moving a Virus

In this example, the orange Virus in the Stomach has four options when it makes one movement:

- **A** Move to the adjacent organ, the Small Intestine;
- **B** Follow the yellow channel to the Liver;
- **C** Follow the yellow channel to the Pancreas ;
- **D** Follow the blue vein and move to Heart 1.

Any other movement would be illegal.



THE ACTIONS DESCRIBED – INFECT • ATTACK • MAGNET • ABSORB • CRISIS

INFECT
Place one Virus from your player board in any Organ. The Virus must be placed with the front side up (no Shield).

If you have no Viruses left on your player board, you may take one of your Viruses from any Organ instead. If that Virus has a Shield, it loses the Shield when it infects.

ATTACK
Remove one Virus from one organ, that belongs to another player. You must own at least one Virus in that organ.

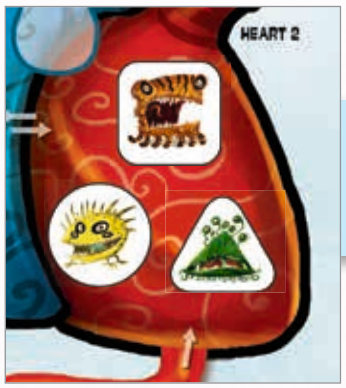
MAGNET
You can pull one Virus into the same Organ as one of your Viruses from another Organ that is one move away.
Or,
you can push one Virus out of an Organ where you have at least one Virus into another Organ that is one move away.
In both cases, follow the normal movement rules.

ABSORB
Choose one of your Viruses in an Organ: Place all the other Viruses in that Organ under your Virus. Those Viruses are treated as if they did not exist in that Organ.

- If the absorbing Virus moves, it takes all the absorbed Viruses with it.
- If the absorbing Virus is removed, you must release all the absorbed Viruses (they are not removed).
- In Step 6, you must release all the absorbed Viruses.

Released Viruses are placed in the same Organ as the absorbing Virus. If this triggers a Crisis, place a Crisis tile immediately. The Crisis will be resolved during Step 4 of the next round.

CRISIS
Trigger a Crisis in an Organ, even if there are not enough Viruses there. Place the lowest-numbered Crisis token available on a Organ. If there are no Crisis tokens left or if that Organ already has a Crisis token on it, do not place one.



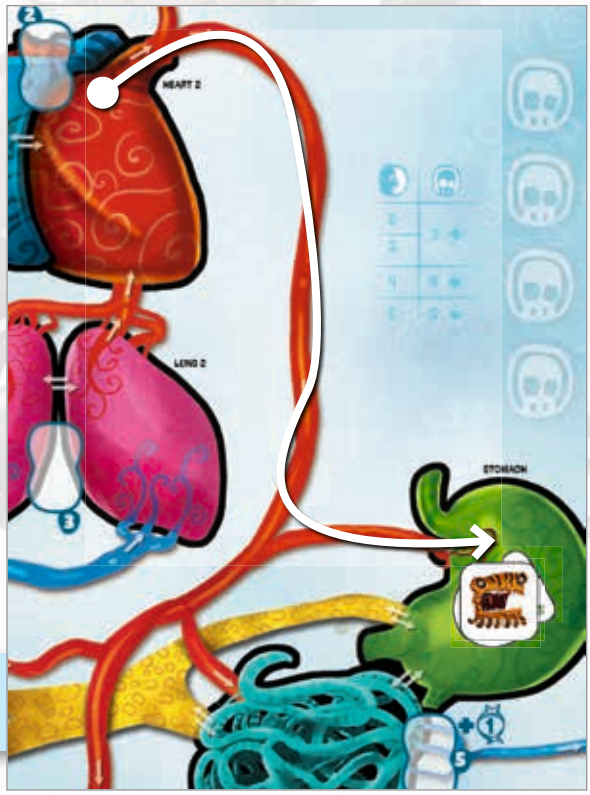
Absorbing Viruses

1. There are three Viruses in the organ Heart 2, when the orange player plays a card with the Absorb action



2. The orange Virus absorbs the other two Viruses. Now there is only one Virus in this organ.

3. Then, the orange Virus takes a move action to go to the Stomach. It takes all the absorbed Viruses with it.



END OF THE GAME SCORING

The game ends at the end of Round 6—when there are no more Event cards.
Now it's time to add up your score! Your score is the total of your:

VPs on the Scoring Track
+
1 VP for each Zone where you have at least one Virus (doesn't matter how many, one is enough to score 1 VP)
+
Any VPs from your Mutation cards



The player with the most VP wins! If there is a tie, the tied player who is lowest on the Tie-Breaker Table wins the game.

2 PLAYER GAME

In a 2 player game, players use a dummy player. Choose a Virus and tokens for the dummy player.

Set up the board following the normal rules for three players with one exception: In step 5 of setup, after a player places a starting Virus in an empty Organ, they must also place a starting Virus for the dummy player, following the normal rules. Once all Organs are occupied, each player will have three starting Viruses and the dummy player will have six. Place the Tie-Breaker token for the dummy player at the top of the Tie-Breaker Table.

Make a pile with all Zone cards that were not used (from the other 3 Viruses), shuffle and place face down near the board. This is the pile the 2 players will be drawing from to see where to place the dummy player's Virus tiles.

In Step 1 each round, before the players choose their first pair of cards, the First Player turns over two cards from the dummy deck. The first Player places 1 Virus (if available) from the dummy player in an Organ of the Zone shown on each card. If it is the same Zone, place 2 Viruses in that Zone.

The dummy player earns VPs during the game as normal, but cannot gain any Mutation cards. Dummy player is affected by the Event cards. Whenever an Event requires the dummy player to choose an option, the 1st player chooses.

During the game, the Tie-Breaker token for the dummy moves accordingly with the score.

EVENT CARDS



MIND CONTROL



- The player who controls Zone 1, scores 2VP.
- See page 8 for how a player controls a Zone.



NUMBER 1



- Remove all Viruses from Kidney 1 and Kidney 2. Each Virus removed scores 1 VP.
- Your Virus must be removed to score points: If a Virus has a Shield, it is not removed and does not score points, but still loses its Shield.
- If an absorbing Virus is removed, it must release any absorbed Viruses in the Kidney. The absorbed Viruses are not removed (and do not score points).



NUMBER 2



- Remove all Viruses from Large Intestine.
- Each Virus removed scores 1 VP.
- Your Virus must be removed to score points: If a Virus has a Shield, it is not removed and does not score points, but still loses its Shield.
- If an absorbing Virus is removed, it must release any absorbed Viruses in the Small Intestine. The absorbed Viruses are not removed (and do not score points).



FAST FOOD



- In turn order, each player places one of their Viruses from any other Zone in any Organ of Zone 5.
- If a player does not have any Viruses in any other Zones, they place one from their player board instead, if possible.



POLLUTION



- The player with the most Viruses in Lung 1, scores 1 VP.
- The player with the most Viruses in Lung 2, scores 1 VP.



MULTIPLICATION

- In turn order, each player must place one of their Viruses from their player board on any Organ.
- If a player has no Viruses available, they ignore this card.



NO SMOKING



- If there isn't one there already, place a Crisis tile on Lung 1.
- If there isn't one there already, place a Crisis tile on Lung 2.
- Always place a Crisis tile with the lowest number available.



ARE YOU IN LOVE?



- The player who controls Zone 2 scores 2 VP.
- See page 8 for how a player controls a Zone.



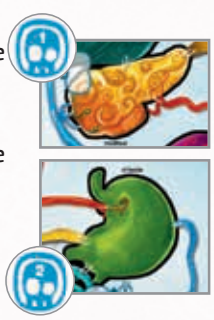
SNEEZE

- For each controlled Zone, award 1 VP.
- Follow the same rules as Step 2, but only award 1 VP for each controlled Zone and DO NOT move any Research tokens on the Research Table.





TOO MUCH SUGAR?



- If there isn't one there already, place a Crisis tile on the Pancreas.
- If there isn't one there already, place a Crisis tile on the Stomach.
- Always place the Crisis tile with the lowest number available.

EVENT CARDS



AGGRESSIVE VIRUS
- All players slide their Research token one space down on the Research Chart.





DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT
- All players slide their Research token one space up on the Research Chart.





INDIGESTION
- All Viruses in Zone 5 gain Shield.
- Flip all Viruses there so their Shield side is up.



MUTATION CARD DRAFT VARIANT:

This variant is for experienced players who want more control over the Mutation cards they will gain during the game. This can allow for more interesting strategies!

When using this variant, replace step 11 of the game setup (see page 5) with these rules:

- Shuffle all of the Mutation cards.
- Randomly deal four Mutation cards to each player. Put the rest of the cards in the box.
- Each player secretly chooses one Mutation card to keep and passes the other three to the player on their left. Then, each player secretly chooses one of those cards and passes the other two to the player on their left. Again, each player secretly chooses one and passes the other to the player on their left. Each player now has a small Mutation deck of four cards.
- Finally, each player chooses the order of the cards in their Mutation deck (which card stays on top, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th), and places their deck face up next to their player board on the opposite side as their "Timer" space.
- You may freely look at any player's Mutation deck, but you cannot change the order of the cards.

When you earn a Mutation card, take the top card from your Mutation deck and add it to your hand.



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