

The fact that illness comes with a distinct set of psychological and behavioral features : [symptom of malaise](#). Animal behaviorists and neuroimmunologists use the term [sickness behavior](#) to describe the observable behavior changes that occur during illness.

Your body sets priorities when fighting germs

- **Fatigue** reduces your level of physical activity, which leaves more energy available for the immune system. For example, fever is a critical part of the immune response to some infections, but the [energy cost of raising your temperature is particularly high](#).
- Increased susceptibility to nausea and **pain** makes you less likely to acquire an infection or injury that would further increase the immune system's workload.
- Increased **sensitivity to cold** motivates you to seek out things like warm clothing and heat sources that reduce the costs of keeping body temperature up.
- Changes in **appetite** and food preferences push you to eat (or not eat) in a way that supports the fight against infection (it also [takes energy to digest food](#), and consuming food also increases your risk of acquiring additional pathogens).
- Feelings of sadness, depression and general **wretchedness** provide an honest signal to your friends and family that you need help.

Sickness as an emotion

This kind of coordinating program is [what some psychologists call an emotion](#): an evolved computational program that detects indicators of a specific recurrent situation (like **shame, fear, stress, disgust**...). When the certain situation arises, the emotion orchestrates relevant behavioral and physiological mechanisms that help address the problems at hand.