

Social network plasticity decreases disease transmission in a eusocial insect

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Protecting the colony

When we get a cold and then stay home from work, we are not only taking care of ourselves but also protecting others. Such changes in behavior after infection are predicted in social animals but are difficult to quantify. Stroeymeyt *et al.* looked for such changes in the black garden ant and found that infected workers did alter their behavior—and healthy workers altered their behavior toward the sick. The changed behavior was especially valuable for protecting the most important and vulnerable members of the colony.

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