

Coral may help block virus replication

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McGill University scientists say they've discovered a small molecule in coral that can be used to block the replication of certain viruses.

The Canadian research shows the naturally occurring product, hippuristanol, specifically impairs the machinery used to make proteins.

Lead author of the study, Jerry Pelletier, and colleagues isolated hippuristanol from the coral *Isis hippuris*. The researchers found that molecule prevents a protein, eIF4A, from binding to mRNA, which carries the code to make proteins from DNA to specific sites of protein synthesis in the cell.

By binding to the mRNA, eIF4A initiates the translation of the protein code and Hippuristanol prevents replication by inhibiting that process.

The research appears in the April issue of the journal *Nature Chemical Biology*

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