# Contamination (drakenheim)

Characters in the world of Drakkenheim may be exposed to eldritch pollutants or arcane radiation emitted by delerium. These hazards cause a new condition called contamination, which inflicts both debilitating symptoms and otherworldly mutations.

Contamination is measured in six levels. An effect can give a creature one or more Contamination Levels, as specified in the effect’s description. If an already-contaminated creature suffers another effect that causes further contamination, its current Contamination Level increases by the amount specified in the effect’s description.

In addition, each time a character finishes a long rest while they have 1 or more Contamination Levels, roll 1d20. On a 1, they gain a Contamination Level.

On Contamination Level 6 or higher, the creature transforms as described in the Monstrous Transformation section.

Contamination Symptoms

A contaminated creature suffers the symptoms from its current level as well as all lower levels.

Level Symptoms

1 None.

2 Hit points regained by expending hit dice are halved.

3 No hit points regained at the end of a long rest.

4 Damage dealt by weapon attacks and spells is halved.

5 The character is incapacitated.

6 Monstrous Transformation!

## Mutations

In addition to suffering symptoms, each time a character gains a Contamination Level, it rolls 1d6. If the result is equal to or less than the character's current Contamination Level, the creature gains a mutation. The Game Master may choose the mutation, or determine it randomly by rolling 1d20 on the Mutations Table below. Unless otherwise specified, a creature can't gain the same mutation more than once. If a duplicate result is rolled, the Game Master chooses a different one or rolls again.

## Removing Contamination

Only magic can remove Contamination Levels. Creatures do not recover from contamination naturally. The purge contamination spell (see the Magic of Drakkenheim chapter) can remove contamination, but it leaves affected characters exhausted. A heal spell removes all Contamination Levels and mutations from a contaminated character. An effect that removes a Contamination Level also removes one randomly determined mutation. All contamination symptoms end and all mutations are removed if a creature's Contamination Level is reduced below 1. Skin, hair, fingernails, and toenails lost to mutations regrow normally once contamination is removed. However, a regenerate spell or similar magic is needed to restore any other body parts (such as teeth, limbs, or eyes).

## Death and Dying While Contaminated

When a humanoid creature with any Contamination Levels dies, it animates as a zombie 24 hours later. A creature with six or more hit dice rises as a wight instead.

A creature restored to life with revivify or raise dead spell reduces a creature's contamination level by one, and all contamination level are removed from a creature restored to life by resurrection or true resurrection. Note however that a fully contaminated creature who was transformed into a monster is not restored to its original form if it is raised or resurrected.

Monstrous Transformation!

A creature who reaches Contamination Level 6 or higher undergoes a Monstrous Transformation into a horrific monster controlled by the Game Master. Once triggered, the transformation finishes in 1 round. It is thereafter permanent. Game Masters are encouraged to narrate a suitably gory description of the transformation.

The Game Master chooses the creature's new form, which is most often an aberration or monstrosity of some kind such as a gibbering mouther. The new form usually has a Challenge Rating similar to that of the original creature — in the case of a player character, their level determines the transformation's Challenge Rating. Under appropriate circumstances, such as very sudden onset of contamination or the presence of arcane anomalies, you can choose one that is much higher or much lower.

The creature's game statistics are entirely replaced by those of the chosen monster. The creature assumes the new form's hit points and Hit Dice. All Contamination Levels are removed, though the Game Master may grant additional traits to the new form similar to any beneficial mutations gained from Contamination Levels.

The Game Master determines what remains of the original creature's personality and memories, if anything. Regardless, the creature is invariably driven mad by the transformation and falls under the Game Master's control.

Reversing the Transformation

The means of reversing a Monstrous Transformation are completely unknown at the outset of the campaign. A transformation is widely regarded as permanent.

A wish spell or similar magic can restore a single transformed creature to its previous form, removing all madness and contamination in the process. This is considered a stressful use of the wish spell, and thus there is a 33 percent chance that the caster will be unable to cast wish ever again if they use the spell in this manner.

The transformation is otherwise irreversible by any

means short of divine intervention. Nevertheless, at the Game Master's discretion, it may be possible to temporarily alleviate a transformed creature's innate madness. However, an intelligent monster who receives long-term treatment of any sort may eventually conspire to contaminate or subtly corrupt its caretakers.

Mutations

1 Rampant Mutation. Roll twice, ignoring this result on subsequent rolls.

2 Rasping. Your vocal cords warp. You can only speak in a halting gurgle. If you have 4 or more Contamination Levels, your tongue rots and falls out, and you can no longer speak.

3 Wasting. Your fingernails, teeth, and toenails start falling out. 2d6 fall out for each Contamination Level you have gained.

4 Rotting. Your lips, nose, and ears blacken and wither. If you reach 4 or more Contamination Levels, they rot and fall off. You can still speak and hear, however.

5 Molting. Painful blisters, welts, and multicolored lesions appear all over your skin, which burst and peel off painfully, exposing the raw sinew underneath. Once you reach 4 Contamination Levels, your skin entirely sloughs off.

6 Shedding. Each time you gain a contamination level, some of your hair falls out in patches. Once you reach 4 or more Contamination Levels, all hair on your body completely falls out.

7 Lambent Glow. You emit a dim octarine glow to a range of 10 feet. If you have 4 or more Contamination Levels, you instead emit bright light to a range of 30 feet.

8 Ocular Tumors. An eyeball opens somewhere on your body for each Contamination Level you have gained. If you have 4 or more Contamination Levels, you can see in all directions.

9 Spiked Growths. At the start of each of your turns, you deal 5 (1d10) piercing damage to any creature you are grappling.

10 Aquatic Adaptation. You sprout fish-like fins and gills. You gain

a swimming speed equal to your land speed and can breathe underwater. If you have 4 or more Contamination Levels, you can only breathe underwater; but can hold your breath outside water for up to 1 hour.

11 Amorphous Form. Your bones and organs become gelatinous. You can move through a space as narrow as 6 inches wide without squeezing.

12 Chitinous Skin. Shell-like growths appear all over your body, giving you a +1 bonus to AC. If you have four or more Contamination Levels, this bonus increases to +2.

13 Cyclopean Vision. Your eyes merge into a single central eye which can emit an energy beam as a ranged spell attack using your Intelligence modifier. If it hits, it deals 2d6 radiant damage.

14 Spatial Displacement. You can cast misty step once for each Contamination Level you have gained. You regain these uses when you finish a long rest.

15 Tentacled Limb. One of your arms becomes a fleshy tentacle. When you make a melee attack on your turn, increase your reach by 5 feet.

16 Spider Climb. You gain a climb speed equal to your walking speed. You can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

17 Whispering Voices. You gain telepathy to a range of 10 feet, but other people hear it as their own voice. If you have 4 or more Contamination Levels, the range extends to 60 feet.

18 Belly Maw. A toothy mouth appears on your stomach, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with it, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier.

19 Eyeless Sight. Your eyes become milky orbs, and you gain blindsight to a range of 10 feet. If you have 4 or more Contamination Levels, your eyes rot out, and dim octarine light burns in the sockets. Your blindsight increases to 30 feet, but you are blind beyond this radius.

20 Arcane Blood. You gain an additional spell slot of the highest

level you can cast (to a maximum of 5th level). If you don’t have spell slots, your hit point maximum increases by an amount equal to your level. If you have four or more Contamination Levels, you gain two spell slots instead of one or increase your hit points by twice your level.

Drakkenheim Madness

Characters facing otherworldly horrors in Drakkenheim may be driven mad by the experience. Instead of a long-term madness effect from the Core Rules, you can apply one of the following flaws instead:

1 “I wish I didn’t have all these useless organs inside me.”

2 “The contamination is a blessing which will transform me into a wondrous creature.”

3 “The monsters are civilians trying to live a peaceful life! We need to protect them!”

4 “I must wear a flesh-coat made from my slain enemies to gain their strength!”

5 “My companions died in the ruins. I’m sorry friends, you are merely ghosts haunting me, you aren’t real. Stop trying to talk to other people.”

6 “I need to eat everything I can find. It’s probably going to be my last meal.”

7 “Drakkenheim is so beautiful at night. I could spend forever wandering the streets by moonlight. We should go tonight! Let’s go every night!”

8 “Don’t you fools get it?! If you die in Drakkenheim, you die IN REAL LIFE!!!!”

9 “A sinister cabal of disembodied hands is plotting against me.”

10 “I must go into the ruins and kill. Rip and tear, until it is done.”

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