



The Tardigrade

Also known as **'water bear'**, the tardigrade is an **oviparous micro-animal** (measuring from 0.1 to 1.5 mm) inhabiting **water** and **moist environments** of any kind – from mountain glaciers to sea depths, and from tropical rainforests to frozen seabeds. Such **environmental adaptation skills** are mostly due to their **sci-fi-like superpowers**: they can stand temperatures ranging from **150°C** to **-270°C** and withstand extremely **low pressures** as well as **1,000 times more radiations than other animals**. When exposed to toxins, dehydration, freezing temperatures and oxygen deficiency, the tardigrade goes into a state of **cryptobiosis** dramatically reducing its metabolism and allowing it to survive from a few minutes to several years, depending on the harshness of the environmental conditions. In **2007**, an experiment brought some tardigrades into **outer space**, where they endured **hard vacuum** and **solar UV radiations**: back to the Earth, over **60% of them revived** subsequent to rehydration.



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