



COVID GLOSSARY OF TERMS

KEEPING UP WITH
COVID TERMINOLOGY

HAVING A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED COVID TERMS CAN HELP YOU SAFELY NAVIGATE THE PANDEMIC. HERE'S A BREAKDOWN OF THE TERMINOLOGY YOU NEED TO KNOW:

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

Aerosol: Small airborne particles; biological aerosols include bacteria and viruses.

Antibody testing: Test to check for antibodies in the immune system that were built up after virus exposure indicating that the individual may have some immunity.

Cloth mask: A non-medical, multilayer fabric mask designed to protect the wearer and surrounding individuals from exposure to contaminants. Designed to be washed immediately after use before reusing.

Community spread: The spread of a contagious disease to individuals in a particular geographic location who had no known contact with other infected individuals or who have not recently traveled to an area where the disease has any documented cases.

Contact tracing: The process of identifying and tracking people who may have been exposed to contagions to prevent further transmission.

Coronavirus: A category of viruses with crown-like spikes on their surface that can affect humans and animals.

COVID-19: The name of the disease causing the current pandemic. The name includes 'CO' for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease and 19 for its emergence in 2019.

Cross-contamination: Unintentional transfer of contagious particles from one surface to another.

Epidemiology: The study of the distribution, incidence and control measures of infectious diseases.

Epidemic: A widespread disease in a certain area.

Essential Services: Businesses and organizations that provide critical services and are allowed to continue to operate for the public good. Examples include healthcare workers, postal workers, waste management, law enforcement, agriculture workers and transportation providers.

Face mask: Designed to be a barrier against liquids such as droplets and spit. Can be worn by sick individuals to protect those in close proximity from their germs, as well as medical professionals or other individuals to protect themselves.

Flattening the curve: An effort to reduce the number of infected patients at any one time to prevent exceeding hospital capacity.

Fomite: Inanimate objects such as public surfaces, clothes and furniture that can become contaminated with infectious agents.

H1N1: Also known as the Swine Flu, this human respiratory infection became widespread in the U.S. and around the world in 2009. This virus is caused by an influenza strain that started in pigs.

Herd immunity: Herd immunity happens when a substantial number of people in a community become immune to an infectious disease that it stops the disease from spreading; immunity can be achieved through a built up immune response or vaccination.

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Intensive Care: The treatment of critically ill patients who require special medical services and equipment.

Isolation: The separating of healthy and sick individuals in a hospital.

Lockdown: A strict mandate that citizens remain in their homes at all times.

Martial law: The temporary replacement of civic rule with military authority during extreme circumstances. It is not likely that martial law will be declared during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

N95/N99 Respirator Mask: The gold standard in respiratory protection from approximately 95% and 99% of airborne particles respectively.

- Designed to have a snug fit and require fit testing to ensure efficiency
- Intended for single use and should not be reused
- Not intended for children or those with facial hair as a tight fit cannot be obtained
- Those with respiratory issues should consult a doctor before wearing one as it can make breathing difficult for compromised individuals.
- N95 masks should be reserved for healthcare professionals and are not recommended for the general public.

Negative Pressure Rooms: A technique that prevents air from flowing out of an isolation room to limit the spread of a virus.

Novel Coronavirus: A type of new coronavirus that has not been previously seen or identified.

Outbreak: A larger-than-anticipated number of diseases in a given area.

Pandemic: An epidemic across several countries.

Personal protective equipment (PPE):

Protective equipment designed to keep healthcare professionals safe from potential contaminants and hazards; can include gloves, masks and gowns.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) Kits:

Customized selection of necessary protective equipment designed to distribute to healthcare professionals.

Physical Distancing: A reminder that people should still maintain social connections through other forms of communication during periods of “social distancing”.

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Test: A diagnostic test to check for an active infection detected in a sample typically obtained through a nose swab.

Quarantine: Intentionally separating oneself from others after suspected exposure to a known contaminant.

Respirator: A tight fitting face covering designed to protect the wearer from airborne particles.

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SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome):

A respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus. It first appeared in China in 2002 and spread worldwide.

Self-isolation: Self-imposed measures to separate oneself from others due to suspected contact with COVID-19.

Serology tests: An antibody test to identify individuals with immunity to a virus following exposure.

Shelter in place: A mandate for citizens to remain in their homes; typically used in the wake of an emergency or natural disaster.

Social Distancing: The practice of leaving six feet of separation between individuals in an effort to reduce the spreading of viruses.

Stay at home: Governmental guidelines to limit the movement of citizens aside from outdoor exercise, trips to the grocery store or other essential services.

Stockpile: A reserve of goods to be used in case of an emergency.

Surgical mask: A loose fitting and disposable mask specifically designed for medical use, to cover the nose and mouth during procedures and care.

Ventilator: A machine designed to move air in and out of the lungs of patients who are unable to breathe independently.



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