

COMMONLY USED TERMS

Person-to-person:

There are several different ways to contract a virus like COVID-19. Person-to-person spread means the virus has been transmitted due to close contact between people, whether the interaction involves actual physical contact or just a cough or sneeze in close quarters.

Social Distancing:

A way of preventing the spread of contagious illnesses, as suggested by the World Health Organization. "Social distancing" doesn't mean staying inside. It means keeping a generous amount of personal space -- minimum three feet -- in between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. This will prevent you from inhaling the majority of the droplets expelled by coughing or sneezing, which can carry the virus.

Coronavirus:

The coronavirus is actually not one type of virus; it is a large family of viruses that also includes SARS and other minor to major respiratory illnesses. Coronaviruses can be spread between animals and people, as we have seen with this current strain.

COVID-19:

COVID-19 is the specific illness related to the current epidemic. The acronym, provided by the World Health Organization, stands for "coronavirus disease 2019," referring to the year the virus was first detected. The name of the virus is SARS-CoV-2.

Epidemic:

An epidemic is a situation where a disease spreads rapidly among many people, and in a higher concentration than normal. It is on a smaller scale, however, than a pandemic. The global COVID-19 outbreak is considered to be an epidemic, though there are fears among governments and medical communities that it could become a pandemic.

N95-respirator:

Many people have turned to the use of facemasks or respirators to ward off the disease. Facemasks are simply a physical barrier, while respirators tend to be tighter fitting and have an element of air filtration. N95 respirators have been cleared for use by the general public, though the CDC and other health officials have cautioned people against wearing them in their daily lives except under specific circumstances.

Outbreak:

An outbreak is a higher-than-normal rate of occurrence of a disease. The terms epidemic and pandemic are often used to describe the magnitude or nature of an outbreak or series of outbreaks. In other words, think of outbreak as the building block of several other coronavirus-related terms.

Pandemic:

A pandemic is a worldwide spread of a disease. This is a higher order of magnitude than an epidemic. In other words, an 'outbreak' is the occurrence of disease cases in excess of what's normally expected; an 'epidemic' is more than a normal number of cases of an illness, specific health-related behavior or other health-related events in a community or region; and a 'pandemic' is basically a global epidemic.