



COVID-19 glossary

Asymptomatic

Showing no symptoms.

Animal-human interface

A setting where microbes (bacteria, viruses, parasites) can pass from animal to humans, or vice-versa. This may be indoors or outdoors.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CDC is the nation's public health agency. It is one of the major operating components of the [United States Department of Health & Human Services](#). CDC [works 24/7](#) to protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the United States. Whether diseases start at home or abroad, are chronic or acute, curable or preventable, human error or deliberate attack, CDC fights disease and supports communities and citizens to do the same.

Close contact

Contact within about six feet of a person for a long time. COVID-19 can be passed from person to person from such contact. Close contact can be made with a person who has COVID-19 while:

- Caring for them
- Living with them
- Visiting them
- Sharing a health care waiting area, or
- Sharing a health care room with them.

This contact can also be made when a person has direct contact with the body fluids of a person that has COVID-19 — such as through kissing or sharing eating utensils.

Cluster

A disease or infection that has spread in a certain area and around the same time.

Community acquired or community spread

A disease caught in the place where a person normally lives and works, and not through travel to another place.

Confirmed

A person who is shown through testing to have a disease.

Congregate

A setting where people reside, meet or gather close to each other.

Contact tracing

Identifying who may have come into contact with a person who has a disease.

Coronavirus (CoV)	<p>Coronaviruses are a family of viruses. They cause approximately 15 percent of common colds, but some members of this family cause more serious diseases, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MERS — Middle East respiratory syndrome, caused by MERS-CoV• SARS — Severe acute respiratory syndrome, caused by SARS-CoV• COVID-19 — caused by a novel coronavirus that has been named SARS-CoV-2. <p>Some coronaviruses known to exist in animals have not yet been found to infect humans.</p>
COVID-19	<p>COVID-19 is the name given to the infection that surfaced in China in December 2019 and has since spread to most countries of the world. It is caused by the coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19 can be mild or severe and is sometimes fatal.</p>
Disease	<p>A condition in a person, animal or plant that weakens its normal functioning. A disease usually shows itself through signs and symptoms.</p>
Droplet spread	<p>Spread of disease by particles of mucus or saliva from the throat, mouth or nose. Droplets are spread through sneezing, coughing or talking; and through hand-to-hand contact.</p>
Emerging infectious disease	<p>A disease that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has appeared recently in a population, or• Has been known for a while but is increasing in numbers or areas.
Epidemic	<p>A disease that attacks many people at around the same time throughout one or more communities, so that numbers of cases are more than would typically be expected.</p>
Exposed	<p>When a person has been in contact with a person, food, thing or area that puts them at risk of a disease.</p>
Infectious disease	<p>A disease caused by a germ, such as a virus, that enters the body and grows and multiplies there, causing symptoms. Most infectious diseases can pass from one person to another.</p>
Illness	<p>Same as a disease.</p>
Incubation period	<p>The time between when a person is exposed to a germ, such as a virus, and when they start showing symptoms.</p>

Involuntary	When a person is not a willing participant in an action being taken. For example, being forced to stay at home (isolation) when they are at a serious risk of spreading a disease to others.
Isolation	Separating people who have an illness from people who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movements of people who have an illness to prevent the spread of the disease.
MERS – Middle East respiratory syndrome	An illness caused by a coronavirus named MERS-CoV. Most people who develop MERS have severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and shortness of breath. The illness was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Only two cases were ever found in the United States, both in May 2014. Approximately 100 cases are now reported each year in Saudi Arabia.
Monitoring	See persons under monitoring (PUM).
Novel coronavirus (nCoV)	A coronavirus strain that was not identified before. For example, COVID-19 is a strain that was not identified before January 2020.
N95 respirator	A disposable mask that covers the nose and mouth and that has to be fit-tested so that air cannot get around it. If fitted properly, the mask protects a person from even tiny airborne particles. The N95 label means that under careful tests, it blocks at least 95 percent of very small (0.3 micron) particles.
Outbreak	An increase in the number of people who have a given disease, so that more cases are seen than expected for that population and time.
Pandemic	An epidemic that has spread over a large region, continent, many continents or the entire world.
PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test	A test that detects genes. PCR testing is used to detect viruses in body fluids.
Person-to-person contact	Contact with an infected person or with their body fluids.

Persons under investigation (PUI)

People who have been exposed to a disease and then developed symptoms, so that public health officials worry that these people too, may have the disease and could spread it to others.

Health officials often want to learn more about these people and test them for illness.

They can then better understand how to prevent further spread of the illness.

- People may become exposed to COVID-19 through:
 - » Contact with an infected person, or
 - » Travel to a place where the virus is very active.
- Signs of illness with COVID-19 include:
 - » Fever
 - » Cough
 - » Shortness of breath
- Health officials may ask these people to limit their movement and contact with others until it can be proved that they do not have the disease. Health officials ask those exposed to COVID-19 to isolate themselves from others by avoiding:
 - » People
 - » Public places, and
 - » Work or school.

Persons under monitoring (PUM)

Broadly speaking, this refers to people who:

- Do not have signs of illness, and
- May have been exposed to a disease that can spread to others.

People may have exposure to COVID-19 through:

- Contact with another person who has COVID-19, or
- Travel to a place where the virus is very active.

Signs of illness with COVID-19 can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath.

Persons under monitoring should watch for symptoms. They may also have a health care provider or public health professional monitor their health.

Health experts may ask these people to limit their movement and contact with others.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing is also called social distancing. The World Health Organization (WHO) advises that people maintain a distance between themselves and someone who might infect them, for example by coughing or sneezing. This is because someone who coughs or sneezes sprays liquid droplets from their nose or mouth. A person too close may get the droplets of a virus, such as COVID-19, from an infected person into the eyes, nose or mouth.

Prevention

Actions to take to avoid being exposed to a disease.

Public health emergency

According to Oregon Revised Statute [\(ORS\) 433.442\(4\)](#) a “public health emergency” means an occurrence or imminent threat of an illness or health condition that:

- (a) Is believed to be caused by any of the following:
 - (A) Bioterrorism;
 - (B) The appearance of a novel or previously controlled or eradicated infectious agent or biological toxin that may be highly contagious;
 - (C) An epidemic of communicable disease; or
 - (D) A natural disaster, a chemical attack or accidental chemical release or a nuclear attack or nuclear accident; and
- (b) Poses a high probability of any of the following harms:
 - (A) large number of deaths in the affected population;
 - (B) A large number of serious or long-term disabilities in the affected population; or
 - (C) Widespread exposure to an infectious or toxic agent that poses a significant risk of substantial future harm to a large number of persons in the affected population.

According to [ORS 433.441](#), upon the occurrence of a public health emergency, the Governor may declare a state of public health emergency as authorized by [ORS 433.441 to 433.452](#) to protect the public health.

Quarantine

Separating and restricting the movement of people or groups who may have been:

- Exposed to a disease or
- Infected but do not show symptoms.

Health officials sometimes use quarantines if they do not know whether a disease can spread before a person has signs of illness.

Reproductive rate (R0) or “R naught”

The average number of secondary infections that may come from one typical case of infection if no one is immune to it. Health experts use this number to measure the potential of a disease to spread.

Reservoir or reservoir of infection	A person, animal, plant, soil or substance where an infectious germ usually lives and multiplies. A reservoir usually keeps the infectious substance without harm to itself. However, it serves as the source of infection to others.
SARS – Severe acute respiratory syndrome	SARS is an illness caused by a coronavirus named SARS-CoV. It is a viral respiratory illness first discovered in Asia in 2003. It spread to more than a dozen countries, killing almost 800. An outbreak in Toronto involved 375 cases, and eight cases occurred in the United States. The last known cases of SARS were reported in 2004.
Screening	A health check made by a health provider to see if a person has a disease.
Shedding	When the germ such as a virus can be found in a person’s saliva, mucus, urine or feces, so that it could spread to others.
Social distancing	Social distancing is also called physical distancing. See the definition under physical distancing.
State of emergency	<p>The Governor can declare a state of emergency when an emergency has occurred or is imminent. Governor Kate Brown declared a state of emergency to address the spread of COVID-19. Governor Brown declared a state of emergency to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state is fully prepared for COVID-19, and • State and local authorities have the resources needed to respond to COVID-19. <p>Below are Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) that further explain the state of emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions for ORS chapter 401 – ORS 401.025 • Declaration of state of emergency; procedures ORS 401.165 • Actions authorized during state of emergency ORS 401.168 through ORS 401.192
Superspreader	A person who has an infection and transfers that infection to a very large number of people.
Suspected	When a health care provider determines that the symptoms of a patient might be due to COVID-19.
Symptomatic	Showing signs of illness.

Symptoms	Signs of illness. For COVID-19, signs of illness are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Cough• Shortness of breath
Transmission	How a disease goes from one person to another person or group.
Treatment	The management and care of a person with a disease. This may involve simple things like giving fluids and oxygen, or it may involve giving medicines or care in an intensive care unit.
T-zone	In infectious diseases, the T-zone is the eyes, nose and mouth. Infectious disease researchers tell people not to touch the T-zone to help prevent the spread of infection.
Voluntary	When a person is a willing participant in an action being taken. For example, staying at home when they are at a serious risk of spreading a disease to others.
Zoonotic	Any disease that spreads from animals to people.

To find out more, go to healthoregon.org/coronavirus or call 211.
