

COVID-19

DEFINITIONS



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Cluster

A group of cases identified at a specific location and time suspected to be greater than expected. Not all clusters are considered outbreaks. Clusters should be quickly and thoroughly investigated to prevent an outbreak or to implement health and safety measures to prevent further spread.

Contact

An individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to testing) until the time the person is isolated.

Contact Tracing

An identification and notification process used by state and local health departments to slow or stop the spread of COVID-19 by letting people know they may have been exposed to someone with the virus. Through contact tracing, individuals are advised to self-monitor for symptoms, receive help in getting tested, be told to self-isolate or self-quarantine.

Herd Immunity

When a large percentage of the population becomes immune to a disease through vaccination and/or recovery from infection. If enough people are immune, it limits spread and protects the entire community. The ability to achieve herd immunity for COVID-19 is unclear because it is unknown if infection results in immunity. Experts estimate that at least 70% of the population (more than 200 million people) would have to recover from, and be immune to, COVID-19 to achieve herd immunity. This could increase the risk of death, long-term health problems and healthcare system overload.

Isolation vs. Quarantine

Isolation separates those with COVID-19 from people who do not have the virus. Quarantine separates and confines those potentially exposed to prevent spread and see if they test positive or become sick. Both isolation and quarantine may be voluntary or required by federal, state, or local public health officials.

Outbreak

More cases of a disease at a specific time or place than expected. If the disease is new, rare, or has serious public health implications, an outbreak may be declared with as few as one or two cases.