

# Coronavirus Lexicon

As the coronavirus spreads around the world, new terms are entering the vocabulary. Here's a guide to the words and phrases we've been hearing.

**Asymptomatic.** When a patient is a carrier for a disease or infection but the virus causes no noticeable illness and no apparent symptoms.

**Coronavirus.** Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

**Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).** According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China" in 2019. The COVID-19 virus is a novel virus that has never been seen before in humans, meaning we do not have the antibodies built up to defend our bodies against it.

**Outbreak.** An increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected among the population in a limited area.

**Epidemic.** A large outbreak. It occurs when a disease moves past its usual borders and infection rates rise dramatically in different locations.

**Pandemic.** The spread of a new disease that affects large numbers of people either at the country, continent or world levels.

**Immunocompromised.** Someone with an immune deficiency or who has a weakened immune system due to a previous or current illness, treatment, or medical history.

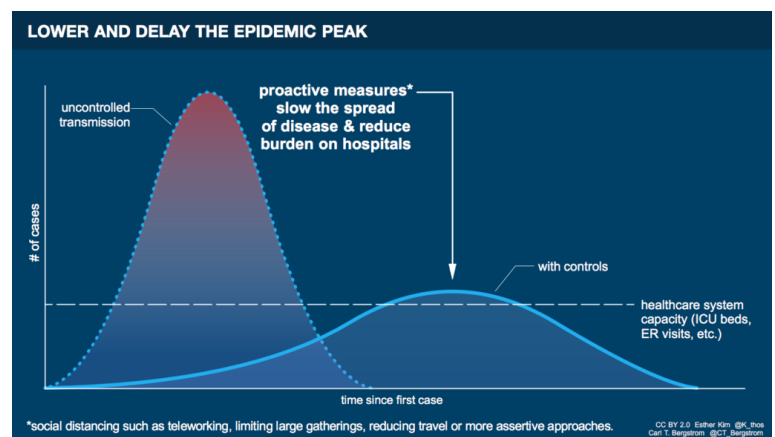
**Incubation period.** The time it takes for symptoms to appear after a person is infected.

**Isolation.** Separating sick people from people who aren't sick. For example, hospitals use isolation for patients with infectious tuberculosis.

**Flattening the curve.** The attempt to slow down the sudden surge of COVID-19 infections that have the potential to overwhelm medical resources. The rate of infection can be slowed through social distancing practices like self-quarantine.

**Lockdown.** This is a government-imposed emergency protocol/order to close down public places and enforce people to stay in their homes enforced by the police.

**Morbidity rate.** A measure of how many people have an illness relative to the population.



**Mortality rate.** A measure of how many people have died because of an illness relative to the population.

**Fatality rate.** The number of deaths divided by the total number of confirmed cases.

**Panic buying.** The widespread buying of goods with the aim of stocking up in the face of perceived disaster: perhaps in case the supply chain fails, to have enough in case you need to be quarantined, or to profit by reselling during times of scarcity.

**PPE.** Personal protective equipment. During the epidemic, this usually refers to face masks, hazard suits and other gear.

**Respirator.** A tight-fitting mask — such as the N95 — that is sealed to the face and protects against 95 percent of airborne particles, both large and small.

**R-naught.** The R-naught, or  $R_0$ , is a virus's basic reproductive number — an epidemiologic metric used to describe the contagiousness of infectious agents.

**Quarantine** refers to a state, period, or place of isolation in which people or animals that have arrived from elsewhere or been exposed to infectious or contagious disease are placed. While in quarantine, you shouldn't receive any visitors and must stay three to six feet from others at all times.

**Self-quarantine.** In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, many individuals are practicing self-quarantine as a form of social distancing, refraining from interactions with others and remaining in their homes to avoid the disease's spread.

**Shelter in place.** Essentially, it means to not leave your house — at all — unless absolutely necessary.

**Shelter-in-place order.** Basically an order for people to self-isolate which is in effect for the entire state or region. Essential service providers like health professionals, police, firefighters, supermarket and grocery workers are still expected to go to work.

**Social distancing.** Measures that are taken to increase the physical space between people to slow the spread of the virus. Examples include working from home, school closings and the postponement or cancellation of mass gatherings.

**State of emergency.** A state of emergency can be declared during natural disasters, epidemics and other public health emergencies. Declaring a state of emergency gives government officials the authority to take extra measures to protect the public, such as suspending regulations or reallocating funds to mitigate the spread of a disease.

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**Zoombombing.** When a virtual meeting is interrupted by uninvited individuals who disrupt the meeting with graphic or threatening messages, actions, or inappropriate content.