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For reliable information on COVID-19, please visit the following websites:

[Santa Barbara County Public Health Department](#)  
[California Department of Public Health](#)  
[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[World Health Organization](#)

## **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Common Terms and Definitions Used to Explain the Illness**

**Coronavirus:** There is more than one [coronavirus](#). It is actually an umbrella term for a family of different viruses, which include SARS. The common cold is also part of this group.

**Novel:** A [novel](#) coronavirus is a new strain of the family of illnesses that has not been previously identified in humans.

**Outbreak:** According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an [outbreak is defined](#) as a situation where the “occurrence of disease cases in excess of normal expectancy.” Outbreaks can be caused by a variety of factors, including infections, human-to-human contact or animal-to-human contact.

**Pandemic:** A [pandemic](#) is the worldwide spread of a new disease. WHO notes that viruses that have caused pandemics usually originated from animal influenza viruses.

**Epidemic:** Unlike a pandemic, an epidemic is specific to one region — such as a city or country.

**Public health orders:** Legally enforceable directives issued under the authority of a relevant federal, state, or local entity that, when applied to a person or group, may place restrictions on the activities undertaken by that person or group, potentially including movement restrictions or a requirement for monitoring by a public health authority, for the purposes of protecting the public’s health. Federal, state, or local public health orders may be issued to enforce isolation, quarantine or conditional release. The list of [quarantinable communicable diseases](#) for which federal public health orders are authorized is defined by Executive Order and includes “severe acute respiratory syndromes.” COVID-19 meets the definition for “severe acute respiratory syndromes” as set forth in Executive Order 13295, as amended by Executive Order 13375 and 13674, and, therefore, is a federally quarantinable communicable disease.

**Presumptive positive case:** Individual who has tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 in at least one respiratory specimen, but testing was conducted at the local or state level. Currently, presumptive positive cases must have samples undergo confirmatory testing at CDC.

**PUI or Person Under Investigation:** Any person who is currently under investigation for having the virus that causes COVID-19, or who was under investigation but tested negative for the virus. The CDC is working with state and local health departments to identify PUIs in the United States and test them for the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Community Transmission (aka Community Acquired, Community Spread):** Means spread of an illness for which the source of infection is unknown. It is also possible, however, that the patient may have been exposed to a returned traveler who was infected.

**Social distancing:** Remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding local public transportation (e.g., bus, subway, taxi, ride share), and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others.

**Self-Isolation:** Staying away from situations where you could infect other people. This means any situation where you may come in close contact with others (face to face contact closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes). Self-quarantine can also be used.

**Isolation:** Separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be *infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious* from those who are not infected to prevent spread of the communicable disease. **Isolation for public health purposes may be voluntary or compelled by federal, state, or local public health order.**

**Quarantine:** Separation of a person or group of people reasonably believed to have been *exposed to a communicable disease but not symptomatic*, from others who have not been so exposed, to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease. **Quarantine for public health purposes may be voluntary or compelled by federal, state, or local public health order.**

**Self-observation:** Individuals should remain alert for subjective fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. If they feel feverish or develop cough or difficulty breathing during the self-observation period, they should take their temperature, self-isolate, limit contact with others, and seek advice by telephone from a healthcare provider or their local health department to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

**Self-monitoring:** Individuals should monitor themselves for fever by taking their temperature twice a day and remain alert for cough or difficulty breathing. If they feel feverish or develop measured fever, cough, or difficulty breathing during the self-monitoring period, they should self-isolate, limit contact with others, and seek advice by telephone from a healthcare provider or their local health department to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

**Active monitoring:** State or local public health authority assumes responsibility for establishing regular communication with potentially exposed people to assess for the presence of fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. For people with high-risk exposures, CDC recommends this communication occurs at least once each day. The mode of communication can be determined by the state or local public health authority and may include telephone calls or any electronic or internet-based means of communication.

**Close contact** is defined as a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case; OR b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

**Congregate settings:** Public places where close contact with others may occur, such as shopping centers, movie theaters, stadiums, [workplaces](#), and schools.