The novel coronavirus and COVID-19 are affecting just about every part of our daily lives, and that may continue to be the case for quite a while. As we all work together to limit the spread of the virus, you may come across terms that are new to you, or at least new in the context of the novel coronavirus. When new strategies are developed to combat this global pandemic, we’ll update the list of terms below to help everyone stay informed about how to follow public health advice and stay safe.

*Note: Rather than being listed in alphabetical order, this glossary groups similar terms together for comparison.*

**Coronavirus:** a family of viruses, of which there are several different types. This new coronavirus, called the novel coronavirus, is officially called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

**COVID-19:** the disease and symptoms caused by SARs-CoV-2. Though often used interchangeably, the novel coronavirus and the disease it causes are slightly different. For example, HIV is a virus, and the disease it causes is AIDS.

**Outbreak:** a sudden rise in the incidence of disease, usually in a certain area or among a certain group of people

**Epidemic:** an increase, often sudden, in the number of outbreaks of a disease above what is normally expected for the population in that area

**Pandemic:** an epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people

**Isolation:** separates a person or group of people *known or reasonably suspected of being infected* with the novel coronavirus from those who are not infected to prevent the spread of disease

**Quarantine:** separates a person or group of people who *may have been exposed to the novel coronavirus but are not yet symptomatic* from others who have not been exposed to prevent the possible spread of disease. In the context of COVID-19, the term self-quarantine has the same meaning; it implies the quarantine is voluntary and not mandated by an agency such as the CDC.

**Social distancing:** avoid mass gatherings and maintain distance (approximately six feet or two arms length away) from others when possible

**Stay-at-home orders:** all individuals are to stay at home except for essential needs (get food, care for a relative or friend, get necessary health care, spend time outdoors with a safe social distance or go to an essential job). This order may be issued to residents at the state or local level.

**Shelter-in-place orders:** typically reserved for large hazardous material releases or severe weather emergencies, but are now being applied to COVID-19. Similar to a stay-at-home order, it directs individuals to stay inside their homes and away from others as much as possible. This type of order heightens the degree of urgency from a stay-at-home order.
**Flatten the curve**: A strategy to reduce the projected number of people who will contract COVID–19 over a period of time. The goal is to slow down transmissions of the virus so health care system capacity is not overwhelmed. A steep curve is created by a sharp increase in the number of cases per day followed by a quick decrease. A flatter curve is created by a more gradual increase in the number of cases per day and a more gradual decrease.

**Infodemic**: an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – that makes it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it

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