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PEM Coronavirus Glossary

C

Case fatality rate
The proportion of deaths from a certain disease compared to the total number of people diagnosed with the disease for a certain period of time.

Close contact
A person who may be at risk of a contagious disease because of their proximity or exposure to a known case. In the case of COVID-19, it is anyone who is within 2 metres (6 feet) of a person infected with new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) for a prolonged period of time or has had direct contact with the infected person's secretions.

Community transmission/spread
When an infectious disease is spreading in an area and the people who are contracting it don't know where or how they caught it. It's an indication that a virus is no longer contained to a limited number of people.

Confirmed cases
The number of COVID-19 cases that have been confirmed by diagnostic testing. Due to a shortage of tests, the actual number of cases that exist is likely much higher.

Contact tracing
The process of identifying, assessing, and managing people who have been exposed to a contagious disease to prevent onward transmission.

Coronavirus
A 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). The novel coronavirus recently discovered has been named SARS-CoV-2 and it causes COVID-19. When viewed through a microscope, the individual virus looks like a sphere surrounded by a spiky crown (or corona).

COVID-19
The name of the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). It stands for "**Co**rona**vi**rus **D**isease 20**19**".

E

Epidemic
An outbreak of a disease that has spread to a wider area.

F

Flattening the curve
Slowing a virus' spread to reduce the peak number of cases and related demands on hospitals and infrastructure.

H

Herd immunity
If a person gets a vaccine or becomes sick from a virus, they develop antibodies against that virus. When enough people have developed antibodies, people are more protected from getting the disease, even if they haven't had the vaccine, because the vast majority is immune and incapable of spreading the virus.

I

Incubation period
The time between when someone is infected with a pathogen, such as a virus, and when the first symptoms of illness appear.

Isolation
When someone who is sick stays away from others so that they do not infect anyone else. Isolation should continue until the risk of infecting someone else is thought to be low, in consultation with a doctor.

L

Lockdown
Prohibiting gatherings and movements, with the exception of movement for basic needs and services.

M

Mortality rate
The number of deaths (in general or due to a specific cause) in a particular population, scaled to the size of that population, per unit of time. Mortality rate is typically expressed in units of deaths per 1,000 individuals per year.

N

Negative-pressure rooms
Rooms specifically designed for patients with contagious diseases that contain any circulating air within the room and prevent it from being released into any other part of the hospital.

O

Outbreak
A sudden rise in the incidence of a disease.

P

Pandemic
An epidemic that has spread over multiple countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people.

Q

Quarantine
It is when someone who has been exposed to a disease but does not show any symptoms stays away from others for a period of time in case they are infected. By keeping their distance, they can avoid spreading the disease to others. A quarantine usually lasts a little longer than the incubation period for a disease.

S

SARS-CoV-2
The name of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 respiratory disease. It stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 and was previously known as 2019-nCoV.

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

Sources: WHO, NHPO, CDC, ECDC