COVID-19: Terms you should know

Asymptomatic
Having COVID-19 but not having symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath). An asymptomatic person can still spread the virus.

Coronavirus
A family of viruses that cause common respiratory illnesses like colds and pneumonia.

COVID-19
Abbreviation for “coronavirus disease 2019.” A respiratory illness caused by the new strain of coronavirus.

Face covering
Covering your face with a homemade cloth or fabric mask to protect others.

Flattening the curve
Slowing the spread of COVID-19 so hospitals aren’t overwhelmed by many patients needing care all at once.

Immunocompromised
Having a weakened immune system due to a health condition like cancer, diabetes or HIV/AIDS.

Novel coronavirus
A term for the new coronavirus strain SARS-CoV-2, discovered in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, which causes the COVID-19 illness.

Pandemic
An illness that has spread over a wide geographic area or worldwide.

Respiratory illness
A sickness affecting the respiratory system and causing symptoms like shortness of breath and tightness in the chest.

Screening
Questions asked to determine if you should get tested for COVID-19.

Self-isolation
Separating yourself from others when you have tested positive for COVID-19.

Self-quarantine
Separating yourself from others if you have been exposed to COVID-19 and are waiting to be tested or waiting for test results, but do not know if you are positive for COVID-19.

Sheltering in place
The act of staying at home and avoiding unnecessary travel.

Social (or physical) distancing
Staying at least 6 feet apart from others to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Testing site
A location that provides COVID-19 testing.

Ventilator
A machine used to move air in and out of a person’s lungs to help them breathe.