

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.

Geisinger