



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 13 – March 30- April 3, 2020

COVID-19 Terms

Introduction

Ever since the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak began, new terms are constantly used by the media and health professionals when trying to communicate information to the general public. The technical name for this virus is SARS-CoV-2 and the respiratory disease it causes is coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19.

It is easy to hear an unfamiliar term and misunderstand its meaning so this week we will discuss the most commonly used terms, what they mean, and how you can better understand the situation in your area based on the terms used.

Monday – Shelter in Place

In recent weeks, many states, cities, and counties are issuing a mandatory shelter in place. Most people are unfamiliar with this order and what it means for communities across the country.

Shelter in place means residents of the affected area must stay in their homes and limit travel to only essential trips, like picking up groceries, going to the bank, or receiving medical care. Shelter in place orders may have provisions permitting residents to walk or exercise outside in public spaces, so long as they maintain a minimum of 6 feet of distance from others.

Shelter in place orders generally close all nonessential businesses and prohibit employees from leaving their homes to work. However, the definition of “essential” businesses can vary depending on the specifics of the order.

Tuesday – Self Quarantine

The term “self-quarantine” is floating around from news outlets to social media posts. This practice is encouraged in order to limit to spread of the virus.

This practice is especially important for people who may have experienced an exposure to COVID-19 or individuals who fall into the high-risk category. Self-quarantine should last a minimum of 14 days as this is typically enough time for symptoms to appear.

For individuals who have recently visited countries or states with high numbers of COVID-19 cases, self-quarantine is a necessity in case you are an asymptomatic carrier of the disease.

Self-quarantine involves:

- Using standard hygiene and washing hands frequently
- Not sharing things like towels and utensils
- Staying at home
- Maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between you and others



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Wednesday – Social Distancing

Another term frequently mentioned in regard to COVID-19 is social distancing. Like self-quarantine, social distancing means increasing the distance between individuals. This can include limiting the time you spend in public places and increasing the space between you and others around you.

Coronavirus can easily spread in areas that have dense populations of people who have high amounts of contact with each other. Bars, restaurants, schools, and gyms only allow for so much room between occupants which accelerates the spread of the disease. Your community officials have likely mandated a shut down of these public places in order to limit the amount of mass gatherings in your area.

Thursday – Flattening the Curve

So far this week, we've discussed shelter in place, self-quarantine, and social distancing. All these precautions ideally lead to "flattening the curve".

Flattening the curve is the idea that society can slow the rate of infection by taking measures such as shelter in place, self-quarantine, and social distancing. The goal is to avoid overwhelming medical resources by reducing the number of patients who simultaneously need urgent medical care.

Friday – Pandemic

With every mention of COVID-19, you've probably heard the word "pandemic". This word is commonly confused with epidemic so let's spend some time discussing the differences between these two words.

An epidemic is the rapid spread or increase in occurrence of something on a local level. When a disease or illness is localized to one area, it is considered an epidemic. However, when it spreads throughout the country or moves to other areas, it becomes a pandemic. In the case of COVID-19, this disease is a pandemic as it has spread from one area to countries all over the globe.