

CoVid-19 Vocabulary and Language Guide (revision 1 March 2, 2021)

1.0 Infectious and Communicable diseases

Infectious diseases are sicknesses caused by *bacteria* or *viruses* (see Section 1.1 and Section 1.2). Some can be passed from person to person (direct or indirect contact), some are transmitted by insects or animals, and others result from eating *contaminated*¹ food or drinking *contaminated* water.

Diseases that are passed from person to person are *contagious*² and also known as *communicable*³ diseases.

Although *bacteria* and *viruses* are both too small to be seen without a microscope, they're as different as ants and elephants.

1.1 Bacteria

Bacteria are single-celled microorganisms (germs or bugs) that can reproduce on their own and can thrive in many different types of environments. They live: extremes of cold or heat; soil; water; radioactive waste; and the human body.

Most bacteria cause no harm to people, and some actually help by digesting food, destroying disease-causing *microbes*⁴, fighting cancer cells, and providing essential nutrients. Fewer than 1% of bacteria cause infections in people.

Infections caused by bacteria include:

- Strep throat⁵
- Tuberculosis⁶
- Pneumonia (see Section 2.0)
- Food poisoning⁷

1.1.1 Antibiotics and Antiseptics

*Antibiotic*⁸ soaps and drugs usually kill bacteria. But, inappropriate use of antibiotics has helped create bacterial diseases that are resistant to treatment with different types of antibiotic medications.

*Antiseptics*⁹ keep wounds clean of bacteria.

1.2 Viruses

Viruses are even smaller than bacteria and require living hosts — such as people, plants or animals — to reproduce. Without living hosts, they can't survive. When a virus enters your body, it invades cells and takes them over, redirecting them to make more viruses and take over more cells.

Viruses can only reproduce by attaching themselves to cells in the liver, *respiratory system*¹⁰, or blood. In most cases, they reprogram the cells to make new viruses until the cells burst and die. In other cases, they turn normal cells into *malignant*¹¹ or cancerous cells.

Diseases caused by viruses include:

- Common colds
- *Influenza* (see Section 2.4)
- CoVid-19

1.2.1 Vaccines

Antibiotics are not effective against viruses

A vaccine is a tiny, weakened, or dead part of the specific virus that is injected into your body like a medicine as a protection, *before that virus infects the body*. A vaccine is not trying to make you sick. Instead, it's just enough of it to get the body's immune system revved up and producing lots of *antibodies*¹². When the vaccine is *administered*¹³, there are more antibodies to guard your cells from harm and to better fight off the virus.

Vaccines reduce the risk of getting a viral infectious disease. Vaccines have drastically reduced the number of new cases of viral diseases such as polio¹⁴, measles¹⁵, and chickenpox¹⁶. In addition, vaccines can prevent such infections such as influenza.

Vaccines are developed, tested, and regulated in a similar manner to other drugs. But, vaccines are even more thoroughly tested than non-vaccine drugs because the number of human subjects in vaccine testing is greater. A vaccine is being developed for CoVid-19.

1.2.2 Antivirals

When a body is infected by a virus, antiviral medicines are used for treatment. They block the take-over of host cells or interrupt the virus as it attempts to copy itself. An antiviral is also being developed to treat CoVid-19 patients.

2.0 Pneumonia, Allergy, Common Cold, or Influenza?

2.1 Pneumonia is usually a bacterial infection which is usually not *communicable*; although it can sometimes be caused by a viral infection like influenza. Pneumonia takes longer to develop and is usually restricted to the lungs. It affects breathing. It is characterized by blue-ish finger nails and lips, pain breathing, short breaths, quick heartbeat, sweating, chills, cough, runny nose, wheezing, decreased appetite, coloured *mucus*¹⁷, extreme tiredness, high fever, confusion.

Antibiotics treat pneumonia.

2.3 Allergy is not *communicable* and is brought on by *immune system*¹⁸ responses triggered by exposure to *allergens* (harmless substances that irritate some people more than others). Allergies might cause itchy, watery eyes; runny nose; sneezing; itchy nose or throat; *sinus congestion*¹⁹, without fever.

Various medications and treatments are available to treat allergies.

2.2 Common Cold is a *communicable* viral infection which affects the nose and throat. Although uncomfortable, the common cold is usually harmless. It is seasonal and characterized by runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, wet cough, *sinus congestion*, coloured mucus, slight body or head aches, low grade fever.

There is no vaccine for the common cold. Various common cold remedies are available to treat the common cold.

2.4 CoVid-19 and Other Influenza Viruses are *communicable* viral infections and come on suddenly. However, a person can be infected by CoVid-19 or other influenza viruses and not show *symptoms*²⁰ for 1 to 4 days (*incubation period*²¹).

While CoVid-19 and other influenza viruses attack the *respiratory system* (the nose, throat, and lungs), they also affect the muscles. They are characterized by body aches and pains, chills and sweats, *dry persistent*²² cough, shortness of breath, extreme tiredness or weakness, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, eye pain, headaches, and high fever. CoVid-19 also seems to affect taste and smell. Complications caused by CoVid-19 and other influenza viruses can be deadly.

There are vaccines available for certain recurring strains of influenza.

As of this revision date there are also available vaccines for CoVid-19 in British Columbia:

- **Moderna** [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know - Canada.ca](#)
- **Pfizer-BioNTech** [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know - Canada.ca](#)
- **AstraZeneca** [What you should know: AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine - Canada.ca](#)

The CoVid-19 and other influenza viruses can be transmitted to others as early as the third day of *incubation* (no symptoms) to a peak *transmissibility*²³ 3 days after the onset of *symptoms*. A person may be *contagious* for as long as 14 days after the onset of *symptoms*.

In some cases, it's difficult to determine whether an illness is viral or bacterial because sicknesses - like *pneumonia* (see Section 2.1) - can be caused by either. But a doctor can determine the cause from patient medical history and by doing a physical exam.

If necessary, a doctor can order a blood or urine test to help confirm a diagnosis, or a *culture test*²⁴ of *tissue*²⁵ to identify bacteria or virus.

Note: the stomach "flu" is a viral disease but is actually called *Viral Gastroenteritis* (VG) and is not related to influenza. It does not attack the *respiratory system*, rather it attacks the *intestines*²⁶. It can be transmitted person-to-person or by eating *contaminated* food or water. It is characterised by *nausea*²⁷, *diarrhea*²⁸, and *stomach cramps*²⁹. The most common treatment for GV is rest and plenty of fluids.

3.0 The spread of CoVid-19 and Other Influenza Viruses

CoVid-19 and other influenza viruses are spread mainly by virus-containing droplets from other people's coughs and sneezes. When these virus-containing droplets are breathed in, they infect the *respiratory tract*³⁰. They can also rest on hands or other surfaces and infect a person by hand to mouth, nose, or eye contact.

CoVid-19 and other influenza viruses can survive:

- up to an hour in enclosed spaces,
- more than eight hours on hard surfaces such as stainless steel and plastic, and
- up to five minutes on hands after transfer from other sources.

3.1 Endemic Influenza is an *outbreak*³¹ of influenza virus which is confined to a place (school or hospital) or to a specific population of people.

3.2. Epidemic Influenza is an *outbreak* of influenza virus which affects many persons at the same time, and spreading from person-to-person within a specific locality, community, or region.

3.3 Pandemic Influenza is an *outbreak* of influenza virus which is *prevalent*³² throughout a whole country, continent, or the world.

4.0 Precautions

4.1 Limiting the spread

- When vaccines are available for any influenza – get the shot! *Immunize*³³.
- Cough and sneeze into the joint of the elbow
- Handwash carefully and completely using hand sanitizer, often
- Keep physical distance between persons (2 meters)
- Avoid crowded indoor spaces
- Mask when outside
- Follow local, regional, provincial, and federal public health orders and regulations

4.2 Quarantine is a cautionary measure to prevent the possible spread of the *communicable* disease. People put themselves or are put in quarantine when they are not currently sick, but have or may have been exposed to a *communicable* disease. The minimum recommended CoVid-19 quarantine period is 14 days.

4.3 Isolation is a medical *intervention*³⁴ to separate a person who is infected with a *communicable* disease from healthy population. It usually involves medical treatment in hospital-like facilities and is meant to stop the spread of disease from infected persons.

4.4 BC Immunization Plan [COVID-19 Immunization Plan - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/diseases/communicable/covid-19/covid-19-immunization-plan)

Sources

BC CoVid-19 Immunization Plan	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/
Canada Health	https://www.canada.ca/
Canadian Lung Association	https://www.lung.ca/
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	https://www.cdc.gov/
Dictionary.com	https://www.dictionary.com
Influenza Specialist Group	http://www.isg.org.au/index.php/
Mayo Clinic	https://www.mayoclinic.org/
MedicineNet	https://www.medicinenet.com
Medscape	https://www.medscape.com/
WebMD	https://www.webmd.com/
World Health Organization	https://www.who.int/

DEFINITIONS

¹ **CONTAMINATED (adj)** [*kuhn-tam-uh-neyt-uhd*]

(in this context) describes anything or anyone exposed to a virus

² **CONTAGIOUS (adj)** [*kuhn-tey-juhs*]

capable of being transmitted (shared) by bodily contact with an infected person or object

³ **COMMUNICABLE (adj)** [*kuh-myoo-ni-kuh-buhl*]

capable of being easily transmitted (shared)

⁴ **MICROBES (n)** [*mahy-krohbs*]

bad bacteria

⁵ **STREP THROAT (n)** [*strep throht*]

bacterial infection of the throat involving fever, redness and inflammation of the throat

⁶ **TUBERCULOSIS (n)** [*too-bur-kyuh-loh-sis*]

infectious bacterial disease of the lungs causing coughing up, fever, weight loss, and chest pain

⁷ **FOOD POISONING (n)** [*food poi-zuh-ning*]

a stomach / intestine condition characterized by headache, fever, chills, abdominal and muscular pain, nausea, runny bowel movements, and cramping caused by foods that are naturally poisonous, chemically contaminated, or by bacteria

⁸ **ANTIBIOTIC (adj)** [*an-tee-bahy-ot-ik*]

capable of slowing or destroying the growth of bacteria

⁹ **ANTISEPTICS (n)** [*an-tee-sehp-tik*]

cleaning solutions that are harmful to infectious microorganisms

¹⁰ **RESPIRATORY SYSTEM (n)** [*ruh-spahy-ruh-tawr-ee sis-tuhm*]

the system by which oxygen is taken into the body and an exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide takes place

¹¹ **MALIGNANT (adj)** [*muh-lig-nuhnt*]

dangerous, harmful, uncontrolled growth; cancerous; lethal

¹² **ANTIBODIES (n)** [*an-tee-bod-eez*]

proteins in the blood that are produced to fight off bacteria

¹³ **ADMINISTERED (adj)** [*ad-min-uh-sterd*]

(in this context) given

¹⁴ **POLIO (n)** [*poh-lee-oh*]

defeated viral disease which attacked the brain stem and spinal cord resulting in paralysis, muscular atrophy, and permanent deformities

¹⁵ **MEASELS (n)** [mee-zuhlz]

highly contagious viral disease (common in children) characterized by fever, nasal discharge of mucus, pink eye, and a rash of small red spots spreading from the forehead down to the arms and legs

¹⁶ **CHICKENPOX (n)** [chik-uhn-poks]

viral disease (common in children) characterized by headache and fever; and blisters on the skin

¹⁷ **MUCUS (n)** [myoo-kuhs]

(in this context) slimy liquid from the nose

¹⁸ **IMMUNE SYSTEM (n)** [ih-myoon sis-tuhm]

complex network of organs, tissues, and white blood cells that protect the body from viruses

¹⁹ **SINUS CONGESTION (n)** [sahy-nuhs kuhn-jes-chuhn]

Blockage of the narrow, hollow passage in the nose by mucus, interferes with clear breathing

²⁰ **SYMPTOMS (n)** [simp-tuhmz]

signs or indications of an infection or disease

²¹ **INCUBATION PERIOD (n)** [in-kyuh-bey-shuhn peer-ee-uhd]

time passed between an infection and the appearance of symptoms

²² **PERSISTENT (adj)** [per-sis-tuhnt]

(in this context) not going away

²³ **TRANSMISSIBILITY (n)** [trans-mis-uh-bihl-uh-tee]

capability of being passed from one person to another

²⁴ **CULTURE TEST (n)** [kuhi-cher test]

test to find a virus or bacteria that causes infection. If infection is not found, the test is NEGATIVE; if infection is found, the test is POSITIVE

²⁵ **TISSUE (n)** [tish-oo]

(in this context) a collection of similar cells forming a definite kind of structural material with a specific function. E.g., connective tissue, nerve tissue, muscle tissue

²⁶ **INTESTINES (n)** [in-tes-tinz]

lower part of the digestive system consisting of a long, continuous tube carrying solid waste to be voided

²⁷ **NAUSEA (n)** [naw-zee-uh]

Feeling of sickness in the stomach

²⁸ **DIARRHEA (n)** [dahy-uh-ree-uh]

Intestinal disorder characterized by abnormally frequent fluid waste from the intestines

²⁹ **STOMACH CRAMPS (n)** [stuhm-uhk kramps]

tightness and pain in the stomach caused by food poisoning, indigestion, or infection

³⁰ **RESPIRATORY TRACT (n)** [ruh-spahy-ruh-tawr-ee trakt]

consists of the nose, throat (pharynx, larynx, trachea), and the lungs with their different compartments

³¹ **OUTBREAK (n)** [out-breyk]

(in this context) sudden increase in viral infection cases

³² **PREVALENT (adj)** [prev-uh-luhnt]

widespread, all-over

³³ **IMMUNIZE (v)** [ih-myoo-nahyz]

to make harmless (immune), usually by an inoculation (by mouth or by injection)

³⁴ **INTERVENTION (n)** [in-ter-ven-shuhn]

(in this context) a medical activity directed at improving a person's health, treating disease or injury

