

Glossary

agent: an organism or substance that causes disease

anthropozoonosis: a disease that commonly affects both animals and humans

asymptomatic: lacking symptoms of disease despite infection

behavioral adaptation: adjusting behavior to cope with particular conditions

biometeorology: the study of interactions between the earth's atmosphere and biosphere

built environment: human-constructed aspects of one's surroundings

carrier: an individual infected with a particular pathogen who is able to transmit it to others, but who shows no symptoms of disease; can also refer to an individual who carries an unexpressed gene for a particular disease

chronic: persisting or recurring over a long period of time

communicable: able to be passed from person to person

contagious: transmitted very easily from person to person

cultural ecology: the study of how cultural practices influence people's interactions with their environment

dead-end transmission: a situation in which a pathogen is unable to spread to new hosts, usually because the pathogen is not well adapted to that species of host

direct transmission: transmission of a pathogen to a new host by physical contact or through the air

endemic: prevalent in a particular area; an endemic disease is one that circulates constantly at low levels in a specified region

epidemic: a sudden, large outbreak of a disease with more cases than expected for a particular time and place

fecal-oral route: the transmission of pathogens through the consumption of fecal matter in contaminated food or water

fomite: an inanimate object or substance that can harbor a pathogen

genetic adaptation: the selection of particular genetic traits in a population over generations that offer survival advantages in local conditions

geogen: an inanimate object or substance that can cause disease

herd immunity: a situation in which a large enough proportion of a population is resistant to a particular disease that the likelihood of a susceptible individual coming in contact with an infected individual becomes so low that disease transmission effectively ceases

horizontal transmission: the passing of a disease from one independent host to another

host: the human or animal in which a pathogen resides; the **primary host** is where the organism completes the sexual stage of its lifecycle, an **intermediate host** is where the organism completes a larval stage

immunologically naïve: lacking exposure to a particular pathogen

indirect transmission: the transmission of a pathogen among hosts via a fomite, vector, soil, or water

infectious: an infectious disease is one transmitted by a pathogen; in general usage the term often also implies that a disease is communicable

landscape epidemiology: the study of how regions produce patterns in disease distributions via factors such as vegetation, geology, and climate

pandemic: a widespread epidemic, usually continent-wide or global in reach

parasite: an organism that lives off another to the detriment of the host

pathogen: a living agent of disease

physiological adaptation: changes to the body that allow an individual to better tolerate local conditions

reservoir: a pool of pathogens that can act as a source of reinfection of human populations; reservoirs can be other animal species or inanimate, often water or soil

social environment: aspects of an individual's surroundings that relate to interactions with other humans, including political, economic, and cultural characteristics

susceptible: vulnerable to a particular disease

transmissibility: the ease with which a disease can spread

vector: an organism that transmits a pathogen between hosts, such as a mosquito or fly

vertical transmission: transmission of a disease from mother to offspring during gestation, birth, or breastfeeding

zoonosis: a disease of animals