

Coronavirus outbreak writing guide

Specific vocabulary

"**Coronavirus**" is an umbrella term for a host of mild to moderate illnesses, including the common cold. The specific coronavirus that's been spreading globally is referred to as a **novel** or **new coronavirus**, to distinguish it from coronaviruses we already knew about.

SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the novel coronavirus. Use this name only when it's necessary to be very technical/specific. Otherwise, referring to "the novel coronavirus" or "the coronavirus" will be enough context for readers.

COVID-19 (all caps, with the hyphen) is the name of the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

It's the virus that spreads, not the disease. When we're referring to the spread of the illness, "coronavirus" is the most accurate. However, saying we want to keep people safe from COVID-19 (all caps, with the hyphen) is also accurate.

Use "**disinfect**," not "sanitize," when talking about cleaning equipment, stations and the like.

Punctuation

"**Health-care workers**" should be hyphenated. Use "**health care**," two words, if you're not using "health care" as a compound modifier: "seek health care," etc.