

## Epidemic vs Pandemic vs Endemic

An **epidemic** disease is one “affecting many people at the same time, and spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent.” The World Health Organization (WHO)

This is commonly used to mean a temporary prevalence of a disease in a certain area.

A **Pandemic** is “a worldwide spread of a new disease.” In March 2020 the WHO officially declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic due to the global spread and the severity of the disease.

**Endemic** means natural to, native to, confined to, or widespread within a place or a population of people. Once enough people have developed immunity to a disease through vaccination or infection, a disease is moved from the pandemic stage to the endemic stage.

Today, Dr. Fauci announced that the United States “is out of the pandemic phase.”

Classifying a disease as endemic indicates a level of permanence. COVID-19 is still here, but in becoming endemic, it will be part of our daily life, much like influenza.

As we learn to adjust to our new normal, we should no longer try to dramatically limit social interactions or refrain from participating in group activities. Instead, we need to take a few small steps to limit the risks to ourselves and others. Stay home if you feel sick. Check yourself for symptoms. Keep a stock of home test kits in your home, and test whenever you have a new cough, sore throat, runny nose, or congestion. Test before attending a large event, especially events attended by vulnerable members of our community. When in doubt, test. Home test kits are available at the Nisqually Pharmacy drive through window.

Take care. Stay safe.

Mary Szafranski, PHO

Chris Scaniffe, RN

