WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?

Difference between Epidemic and Pandemic

A pandemic is a global outbreak of disease. Pandemics happen when a new virus emerges to infect people and can spread between people sustainably. Because there is little to no pre-existing immunity against the new virus, it spreads worldwide.

The virus that causes COVID-19 (coronavirus) is infecting people and spreading easily from person-to-person. On March 11, the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Epidemic vs Pandemic**

**Epidemic**
- Event in which a disease is actively spreading.
- Often used to describe a problem that has grown out of control.

**Pandemic**
- Relates to geographic spread.
- Describes disease that affects a whole country or the entire world.

Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention