

## ***MISSION BRIEFING: Vocabulary Terms***

Vocabulary terms that are fundamental to understanding the concepts included in Mission Five are listed below. Some of the words will be encountered while playing Mission Five. They are hot-linked in the mission so you can click on them and get the definition as you play.

**Aerosol Transmission** – The ability for a disease to infect persons through the air via small droplets (as from a cough or sneeze).

**Animal Sentinels** – Animals that warn of health or environmental hazards. Zoonotic diseases may make animals sick before being transferred to humans. For example, outbreaks of West Nile are usually preceded by dead birds and sick horses.

**Bacteria** – A single-celled organism that has a cell wall but lacks a nucleus; bacteria can cause disease.

**Bioterrorism** – Intentionally using pathogenic organisms or agricultural pests to infect humans or critical food sources for political motives.

**Cutaneous** – Referring to or having to do with the skin.

**Disease Reservoir** – Place where a pathogen can be permanently maintained and transmitted to humans.

**Epidemic** – A disease that appears as new cases in a given human population, during a given period, at a rate that substantially exceeds what is "expected."

**Fungi** – An organism that has a cell wall and a cell membrane. They include molds (filamentous multicellular type) and yeast (unicellular spherical type). Fungi can spread through direct contact, indirect contact, water, air, and animals.

**Gastrointestinal** – Referring to or having to do with the digestive tract.

**Helminth** – Multicellular worms that can be parasites in the intestine, blood, or body tissue. Helminths can spread through direct or indirect contact, food, water, and air.

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**Infectious Disease** – Any disease caused by invasion by a pathogen that subsequently grows and multiplies in the body.

**Lesions** – Abnormal tissues on the body, usually on the skin or in the mouth. Examples include acne, rashes, scratches, etc.

**NET-Link** – A new tool issued to all Reconstructor agents. The NET-Link allows for instantaneous communications between agents. It also collects the clues agents may uncover during their investigations and all relevant locations.

**Pandemic** – An outbreak of an infectious disease across an entire country (or more); an epidemic over a wide geographic area and affecting a large proportion of the population.

**Pathogen** – An infectious or biological agent that causes disease or illness to its host. Examples include bacteria, viruses, prions, protozoa, fungi, and helminthes (multicellular worms).

**Prion** – (pronounced PREE-on) An infectious agent made only of proteins. Prions cause Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow) in cows and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans. The disease is spread through abnormal proteins that cause other normal proteins to change to the prion's abnormal form (and scientists are still unsure exactly how they do this!). All known prion diseases are currently untreatable and fatal.

**Protozoa** – Simple, single-cell organisms such as the amoeba and paramecium. Some have flagella or cilia and are capable of rapid movement. Protozoas can spread through food, water, and animals.

**Pulmonary** – Referring to or having to do with the skin.

**Ruminant** – Any animal that chews its cud (partially digested food that can be saved in the first of several stomachs and chewed repeatedly). Ruminants include cows, goats, sheep, camels, giraffes, buffalo, deer, and antelope, among others.

**Symptoms** – Information conveying the sensation of illness or change in health function.

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**Vaccine** – A substance made out of dead or weakened viruses or bacteria used to prevent a specific disease by producing an immune response in the body.

**Vector** – An organism, such as a mosquito or tick, that does not cause disease itself but carries pathogens from one host to another.

**Virus** – A tiny infectious agent that is only able to grow or reproduce inside a cell. Composed of an outer protective shell and an inner part consisting of genetic material. A virus has no other structures and does not have any metabolism. It cannot reproduce by itself, but instead invades a host cell and uses the cell to produce copies of itself (which leave the cell to infect other cells).

**Zoonosis** – (pronounced ZOO-no-sis) An infectious disease that can be transmitted from other animals, both wild and domestic, to humans or back and forth from humans to animals. Zoonoses comes from the Greek words "zoon" (animal) and "nosos" (disease). These diseases have been passed from animals to humans since prehistoric times, and new zoonotic diseases are always evolving. (Zoonosis is singular; zoonoses is plural.)