

What is an Outbreak Scenario Assessment?

Scenario assessments outline a range of possibilities for the course of an outbreak and assess which is most likely, based on currently available information and expert judgment.

Frame Scenarios

A scenario assessment outlines multiple possible futures of the outbreak, usually ordered from best-case to worst-case outcome. These scenarios can be described in terms of severity, spread, duration, and geographic distribution.

Identify Indicators

To help assess which scenario is most likely occurring in the given outbreak, we provide a set of qualitative and/or quantitative metrics, which we refer to as indicators, with levels that correspond to each scenario.

Incorporate Modeling Insights

Modeling may be incorporated into the assessment to address important decision-maker questions such as:

- How effective are the available interventions?
- How large will the outbreak be? How far into the outbreak are we?
- What are the most important sources of uncertainty in the outbreak, and how much will these unknowns impact its progression?

How do we assess which scenario we are in?

We rely on expert judgment and data to determine which scenario is most likely occurring given available indicators. The list of indicators for an outbreak scenario assessment may include information such as:

- Measures of outbreak growth or containment
- Detection of cases in new populations or geographic regions
- Extent and/or success of interventions, such as the proportion of exposed contacts in quarantine
- Disease-specific characteristics, such as clinical severity

1 st Indicator	Scenario A
2 nd Indicator	Scenario A
3 rd Indicator	Scenario C
4 th Indicator	Scenario A
5 th Indicator	Scenario B

In this assessment, three out of five indicators are consistent with Scenario A, so we would likely assess that the outbreak is most consistent with Scenario A.

Scenario assessments inform CDC leadership, public health professionals, and partners engaged in planning and executing emergency response activities.



cdc.gov/forecast-outbreak-analytics



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