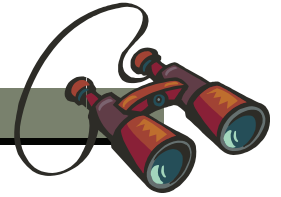


# Introduction to Public Health Surveillance

## Glossary



**Active surveillance:** process where health departments (or responsible agencies) actively initiate contact with clinicians, laboratories, or other data sources to seek out information about disease occurrence and cases.

**Case definition:** a set of standard criteria for deciding whether a person has a particular disease or health-related condition, by specifying clinical criteria and limitations on time, place, and person.

**Passive surveillance:** provider-based approach of data collection, in which health departments/CDC wait for disease reports to be submitted by laboratories, clinicians, and/or the public.

**Public health surveillance:** The systematic collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of health data on an ongoing basis, to gain knowledge of the pattern of disease occurrence and potential in a community, in order to control and prevent disease in the community.

**Sensitivity:** the ability of a surveillance system to detect epidemics and other changes in disease occurrence.

**Sentinel surveillance:** a surveillance system in which a pre-arranged sample of reporting sources agrees to report all cases of one or more notifiable conditions.

**Specificity:** the proportion of persons without disease who are correctly identified by a screening test or case definition as not having disease.

**Syndromic surveillance:** the collection and analysis of pre-diagnosis information that lead to an estimation of the health status of the community.

