

The Terms “Air-borne” vs. “Aerosol-borne”: Their Meanings

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The terms ‘air-borne’ and ‘aerosol-borne’ have specifically different literal meanings. For accuracy, their definitions should be understood as follows:

air-borne *adj.* carried by or through the air: as air-borne bacteria, air-borne troops,^(1a) suspended in, transported by, or spread by air, as an infectious disease or a pathogen.^(2a)

aerosol *n.* [aero- (air, gas) + sol (solution)], a suspension of colloidal particles in a gas,^(1b) a colloid system, a type of solution in which the continuous phase (dispersion medium) is a gas, e.g., fog.^(2b)

aerosol-borne *adj.* transported by, or spread by aerosol, as legionella infection.⁽³⁾

References

1. Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, College Edition. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co.; 1958. p. 30(a), 22(b)
2. Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary, 31st Edition. Philadelphia: Saunders; 2007. p. 42(a), 36(b)
3. Bovornkitti S. Aerosol-borne disease; legionellosis. *J Health Syst Res* 2009;3:489-94.



Aerosols such as the steam from gysers and hot springs can transport disease-causing agents

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