

Searching for DNA in sewage may help public health officials monitor emerging diseases

With every toilet flush, valuable information encrypted in DNA is lost. Wastewater may hold a wealth of insight for public health officials, and an interdisciplinary team of Stanford researchers is keen on tapping into it.

Currently, disease response is reactive; doctors and public health specialists can't do much until patients report their symptoms. Even then, new and elusive pathogens escape early detection. Looking at the bugs in our waste, however, could speed up disease tracking. Stanford professor of civil and environmental engineering [Craig Criddle](#) – and a team that includes engineers, disease experts and statisticians – is working to fish out and track the DNA of pathogens in wastewater.

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The researchers will look for pathogen DNA from a menu of bacteria and viruses, and will also keep an eye out for new and unexpected critters. They hope their project will reveal the broad diversity of microbes in our waste. The research could also validate their tools as way to rapidly track the disease-causing bugs.

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Criddle hopes the method developed at Stanford will be adopted by utilities and public health agencies....

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [DNA in wastewater could provide clues to help community health, Stanford researchers say](#)