

## Our wastewater could provide 'early warning' system for coronavirus outbreaks

We won't have to shelter from the new coronavirus forever. ... But several predictors of Covid-19 outbreaks suggest the virus could be seasonal, returning with fury in the fall. ...

How will folks know when it's safe to come out and when to go back indoors? There may be clues in our sewage.

Dozens of scientists across the globe are sampling poo to find tiny shreds of the coronavirus that can serve as an early warning of outbreaks. In theory, if viral levels reach a certain threshold, health experts can tell more people to stay home.

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Detecting the virus through sewage is only the first step toward using poo analysis as an early outbreak warning system, according to Krista Wigginton, an associate professor at the University of Michigan... . She is leading a [joint project](#) between UM and Stanford University ... to study how the coronavirus worms through our pipes.

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Finding new ways to track the coronavirus is especially important because many cases appear to be [asymptomatic](#) and the United States has [a limited number of tests](#). Not everyone who gets a Covid-19 infection gets severely sick, sees a doctor, or gets tested, but they can still spread the virus. Surveilling sewage gives health experts a bigger picture of the pandemic's scope.

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