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## CDC expands efforts to detect coronavirus in wastewater, sees uses beyond the pandemic

Agency begins posting data from hundreds of collection sites across the U.S.



In this file photo, wastewater sits inside of a partially operating treatment tank at the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission, Thursday, Nov. 15, 2012, in Newark, N.J. The CDC announced on Feb. 4, 2022, that it is expanding efforts to sample ... [more >](#)



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By Tom Howell Jr. - The Washington Times - Friday, February 4, 2022

Want to know if a COVID-19 wave is heading to your town? Check the poop.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said last week it is expanding efforts to sample wastewater for the virus and is posting data from its national surveillance network for the first time on its online COVID-19 tracker.

"It allows you to compare data across states directly," Amy Kirby, the program lead for CDC's National Wastewater Surveillance System, said Friday.

The CDC says infected people can shed the coronavirus in their feces even if they don't show symptoms. The viral RNA can be detected in wastewater when it is sampled from a treatment plant.

Screening the sewer system allows public health officials to get a sense of whether the virus is surging or easing in a specific area and dispatch limited resources to where they are needed. It is also a way to track the virus without depending on individuals to seek out testing or go to the doctor when they are sick.

Scientists say wastewater surveillance serves as an early-warning system for communities. It often detects increasing levels of the virus in the sewer system four to six days before cases pop up through