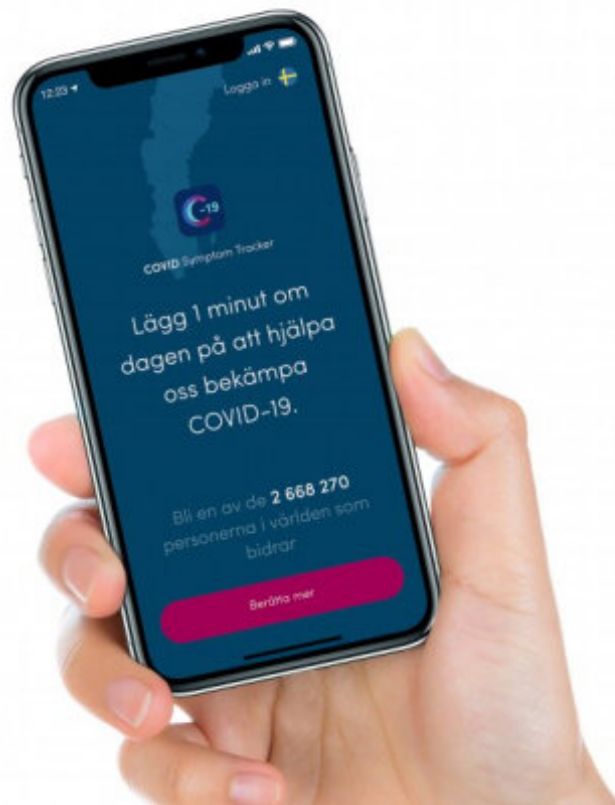


COVID Symptom Tracker app launched in Sweden

April 29 2020



Download the app, log your data and help researchers fight COVID-19. Credit: Lund University

Researchers at Lund University in Sweden have launched a free app to

help map the spread of infection in Sweden and increase knowledge of the coronavirus.

"Data from the app will give us a clearer picture of the development of the disease and why some people only experience [mild symptoms](#) while others get seriously ill and die," says Paul Franks, professor of genetic epidemiology.

It takes approximately one minute per day to answer simple questions about your health, but it could contribute to a reduction in the spread of COVID-19. The aim of the app is to find out:

- which parts of Sweden have a high risk of infection
- which behavioral factors raise a person's risk of adverse outcomes and how underlying health conditions affect risk
- how quickly the virus is spreading in different parts of Sweden

The app is used in the UK, the US and will be launched soon in India. It was originally developed by physicians and researchers at King's College in London and Guys and St Thomas' Hospitals together with developers at the health science company ZOE Global Ltd.

When the coronavirus outbreak began, the app was quickly developed. The COVID Symptom Tracker makes it possible for the public to report symptoms and thereby give researchers an overview of the national health status. The data collected are regularly channeled to the National Health Service in the UK to aid decision making. Thanks to an existing research collaboration, researchers at Lund University were also given the opportunity to quickly adapt the app so that it can be used in Sweden.

Professor Paul Franks believes the tool can provide decision makers with valuable insight into how contagious the virus is and what drives its spreads.

"As there are so few who are tested for the virus at this time in Sweden it is hard to gain an understanding of how widely it's spread. Therefore, we have offered the Swedish Public Health Agency access to the results we will collect with the app, in the hope it will help inform their decisions," he says.

The information collected using the app indicates which symptoms are linked to COVID-19.

"We already know that a fever, cough and breathing difficulties are symptoms to watch out for. However, information collected using the app in other countries shows that headaches, muscle aches and the loss of smell and taste as well as diarrhea can also be symptoms of infection," says Maria Gomez, professor of physiology, who together with Paul Franks has played an active role in the work to launch the app in Sweden.

It is important to emphasize that the app is not a [diagnostic tool](#), nor does it collect data such as names, personal identification numbers, addresses or telephone numbers. Participants supply an e-mail address when they first create a [user account](#), but e-mail addresses are not included in the research database. The app user's location is based only on the first two digits of the postal code in order to protect the user's identity. No GPS data is collected, and the app does not in any way attempt to trace the user's movements.

All information is handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will only be used for research and not for commercial purposes. The use of the app and participation in the research study is voluntary and the study has been approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority.

The researchers encourage as many people as possible to use the app

daily until the pandemic is under control.

"The only thing you do is report things related to your symptoms and circumstances. If you are healthy, we want to know that too! The more people use the app the better," concludes Maria Gomez. We are happy to have colleagues from Uppsala University in our team and we hope this can quickly become a joint national effort to fight COVID-19.

More information: The app is available via the App Store or Google Play:

[apps.apple.com/se/app/covid-sy ... tracker/id1503529611](https://apps.apple.com/se/app/covid-symptom-tracker/id1503529611)

[play.google.com/store/apps/det ... om.joinzoe.covid_zoe](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.joinzoe.covid_zoe)

Provided by Lund University

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