Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

COVIDTracer 1.0

Updated June 16, 2020

COVIDTracer is a spreadsheet-based tool that allows state- and local-level public health officials and policy makers to compare three different contact tracing/monitoring strategies.

The tool allows you to vary estimates of the potential effectiveness of each strategy, the average number of contacts per case, and the time needed for case interviews and contact follow-up activities. Once you have entered such information, COVIDTracer provides you with estimates of the number of personnel needed to conduct case investigations, contact tracing, and case and contact monitoring. You can then compare the potential effectiveness of each of these three strategies to a baseline situation of continued social-distancing type interventions that have a user-defined level of effectiveness.

To use the COVIDTracer tool in your local jurisdiction, you first define the population, the number of cases to date, and the cases in the past 14 days. You also enter an estimated number of contacts per case and expected number of hours per day that contact tracers would work. You can assess up to three case identification and contact tracing and monitoring strategies simultaneously and compare the impacts on the total number of COVID-19 cases for each strategy over the course of the pandemic versus a "base case" social distancing scenario.

FAQ

Can COVIDTracer be used to accurately estimate the impact of COVID-19?

The numbers generated through COVIDTracer are NOT to be considered predictions of what will occur during a novel coronavirus pandemic. Rather, they are illustrations designed to aid public health officials in planning and preparing for contact tracing of COVID-19 cases.

Can users change the input variables?

Absolutely. When you download and open the COVIDTracer, all inputs are pre-populated with numbers and estimates based on the best available data wherever possible (e.g., peer-reviewed studies, expert opinion, and pre-print manuscripts). You can change the values in the white cells in the tool, inputting values that best illustrate the situation in your jurisdiction. Further, we encourage you to change input values and explore the impact of various scenarios and assumptions (e.g., hours spent to initially interview a case). In the tool, you can click the yellow information buttons on each page to see definitions and explanations. If you want to return to the default settings, click the "Reset to Default Values" button. Additional explanations are provided in the accompanying manual.

System Requirements

COVIDTracer uses the Windows* operating system (Microsoft Windows 2010 or higher) and Excel (Microsoft Office 2013 or higher). The full functionality of COVIDTracer is supported in the desktop version of Microsoft Office® for Windows. Some functionality will not be available in Microsoft Office for Macs or in the browser version of Office 365.

*Microsoft Windows and Office are copyrighted products produced by Microsoft Corporation, WA. The use of trade names and commercial sources is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Download the Files

We recommend downloading and saving the COVIDTracer spreadsheet to your computer, then open the spreadsheet from your computer. This will allow the spreadsheet to open in Excel instead of your web browser.

- COVIDTracer Spreadsheet CDC [Excel – 5.7 MB]
- COVIDTracer Manual CDC [PDF – 1 MB]

Load, Start, and Navigation

- Open the COVIDTracer spreadsheet and click the box at the top of the document that says, "Enable Macros," or "Enable Content" (depending on version of Excel being used).
- After enabling macros, click the "Start" button on the cover page to start navigating the tool.
- If you encounter any issues, contact HEMU@cdc.gov with a subject line [COVIDTracer tool inquiry].