

# Healthy Summer

## TPH's work to support summer activities

Presentation to Toronto's Board of Health

July 4, 2023

- Reducing the risks associated with food consumption
- Preventing illnesses that can be transmitted from animals and insects/ticks
- Responding to physical and chemical risks in our environment including wildfire smoke
- Leveraging data, processes and technology, and innovative approaches to meet significant and variable service demands

"Good food properly prepared and eaten regularly, is one of the chief essentials to health and happiness."

Toronto Medical Officer of Health Dr. P. Jackson, 1934



# Ensuring Food Safety: Focus on Special Events

- Ensuring food safety in Toronto is a significant undertaking
  - DineSafe oversees 17,000+ food premises in Toronto
  - Toronto hosts 1,400+ special events that serve food each summer
- Summer heat increases risk of harmful bacteria if food is not properly prepared and stored.
- The large number of seasonal events requires a streamlined approach to identify likely health risks and mitigation strategies

The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to explore the feasibility of requiring a Food Safety Management Plan for each organization that applies for a special events permit that includes the provision food, in consultation with relevant City divisions, and report back to the Board of Health on the outcomes of this work by the fourth quarter of 2024.

- Access to safe water is one of the greatest public health achievements
- Summer months bring increased water recreation at pools and beaches. TPH inspects/oversees:
  - 1,200 indoor pools (year round) and 700+ outdoor seasonal pools
  - Water quality of beaches from June to September
- New methods allow TPH to inspect more spas and pools, more efficiently
- TPH investigating the use of artificial intelligence to predict beach water quality in areas where traditional testing is less useful

# Preventing Exposure to Animal Diseases: Focus on Rabies Prevention

- Summer brings a significant increase in animal-human contact and international travel, which leads to more potential rabies exposures
- Rabies is a fatal but preventable viral disease, transmitted from the bite of an infected mammal
- Rabies is rare but present in bats in the GTA
- Innovative methods have been developed to receive and provide risk assessments to both clients and their health care providers

# Vector borne Diseases

## Increased focus on prevention

- Vector borne diseases are transmitted by infected insects or ticks
- Climate change has already begun to increase the risk of these diseases in Toronto
- Provincial government has recently expanded the vector borne diseases being tracked to monitor their occurrences in Ontario
- By tracking these diseases, public health can provide local guidance on preventing exposure to the insects and ticks



# Environmental Health Risks: Focus on Hot Weather

- Pre-pandemic review of the Heat Relief Strategy led to the creation of the Toronto Heat Relief Network (550 locations), which provides relief from hot weather for the entire summer season
- The Heat Relief Network is informed by studies showing that people are more likely to use a cooling location if it is close to them
- TPH also ensures public awareness of heat warnings and provides public education materials

# Environmental Health Risks: Air Quality

- Due to climate change, wildfires have become an increasingly significant concern worldwide, causing widespread damage to ecosystems, communities, and public health.
- The effects of wildfires extend beyond the immediate vicinity of the fire, as smoke can travel vast distances, impacting air quality in distant regions.
- Toronto has experienced the far-reaching consequences of wildfire smoke on its air quality, which can affect the health of the population.

- Individuals can experience immediate symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat when exposed to poor air quality
- Air pollution may also cause longer term health issues such as lung and heart problems, affect birth outcomes, brain development and function, and is linked to cancer, chronic diseases (including diabetes), and other illnesses

- Children, older adults, pregnant women, and individuals with underlying health conditions are most at-risk
- Poor air quality can exacerbate existing health conditions and contribute to lung and heart emergencies and hospitalizations

# Air Quality Health Index (AQHI)

Toronto Downtown				
	7 High Risk	7 High Risk	6 Moderate Risk	5 Moderate Risk
Toronto East				
	6 Moderate Risk	7 High Risk	6 Moderate Risk	5 Moderate Risk
Toronto North				
	7 High Risk	7 High Risk	6 Moderate Risk	5 Moderate Risk
Toronto West				
	7 High Risk	7 High Risk	6 Moderate Risk	5 Moderate Risk

The Board of Health request that the Medical Officer of Health assemble the current public health advice and evidence in response to wildfire smoke into a Toronto Public Health Wildfire Smoke Response Strategy, which should 1) reflect the best available public health evidence and guidance to respond to poor air quality in Toronto due to wildfire smoke, 2) include specific recommendations and actions for residents most vulnerable to the negative impacts of poor air quality, and 3) be iterative and responsive to new evidence on the health impacts of wildfire smoke.

- TPH prepares each year to respond to summer-based public health issues
- Identifies and implements technology and innovation to meet demand
- Climate change will continue to influence and shape TPH's work