

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**March 27, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.**  
**Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- As of 1 p.m. today there are 457 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Toronto, this is up 118 from yesterday. There are 29 cases hospitalized, 15 in ICU. Approximately 25% are attributed to community spread and 18 people have recovered. These numbers are constantly changing and increasing.
- These numbers are a significant increase and I expect that we will continue to see similar patterns in the coming days ahead.
- As I have recently stated you can be infected with COVID-19 and not know. For most people it takes about 5-6 days before they show symptoms of illness. For others it can take up to 14 days.
  - There can be a number of days from the time you show symptoms, to when you get tested and then receive the result.
  - We also know March break recently ended, and there has been an increased number of travellers returning back to our city, many from destinations where COVID-19 is circulating.
  - This means that the positive tests we are getting now are the results of infections that happened several days ago.
- This is why I continue to urge people to practice physical distancing. I continue to be troubled by some of the stories I hear of people continuing to ignore social distancing.
- For example, I have heard that people are shopping for groceries and essential supplies in groups or as a family, treating shopping as a social outing. While in normal circumstances these kinds of actions can seem harmless, they are concerning in our current situation.



## Public Health

- If we continue to see people selfishly ignore the recommendations put in place to keep us safe, should prepare to continue to see dramatic increases in local numbers. Please take every action that you can to respectfully practice physical distancing at this critical time. If you are not willing to do this for yourself, then please take these actions for your loved ones.
- The physical distancing measures we are asking you to take are critical for our health as individuals and as a city. We also need to ensure we are taking care of our mental health.
- Everyone has different ways to cope with the challenges we are facing and so much has changed in the world since this virus was first identified in January. We watched this virus spread across the world and cause all of our lives to change. It is understandable that these uncertainties are causing people to feel anxious, or worried about their future.
- We know that staying home is one of our best defenses to fight this virus. We understand spending a lot of time at home can create new stresses for some. Looking after your mental health is as important as your physical health. There are many things you can do to keep your mental health on track:
  1. Simple breathing exercises, or meditation can help ease stress and activate relaxation.
  2. Eating healthy foods like fruits and vegetables and drinking lots of water can help people to feel better.
  3. Getting active is a great way to reduce stress, improve your mood and overall health. There are plenty of ways you can exercise in your home— find videos on YouTube.
  4. Staying connected with friends and loved ones by phone, video calls and text messaging. Spend time talking to people who are a positive influence when you are feeling stressed and lean on each other for support.
- I also want to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our healthcare, front line, and essential workers, including those that support people experiencing homelessness. We need to support them at this critical time so they can continue to care for our community.

- As we adapt to our current new challenging circumstances, it is understandable to feel stressed and overwhelmed. It is important to find ways to stay connected, while respecting physical distancing in our new reality. This will help us to stay emotionally healthy and resilient during this pandemic.
- I also encourage those who may need further support to seek professional help. We have posted some community resources on our website.
- We continue to receive many questions about how people can stay active while practicing physical distancing:
  - You can try free live-streamed fitness classes or apps to guide an in-home workout.
  - If you are symptom-free, have not travelled recently, and have not been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, you can still go outside for a walk or run.
  - The important thing to remember is to maintain a distance of two metres or 6 feet from others at all times.
- I have also received questions about how long these physical distancing measures and non-essential business closures will last. The reality is that we need to be prepared for extended closures. Based on the experiences of other jurisdictions such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, it took several weeks of strong public health measures to start to see the effects of social distancing.
- We are fighting an invisible war with this virus, and we need everyone to do their part. Please continue this very responsible action to stay home, stay safe and take care of each other.

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