

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
March 24, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- As of 1 p.m. today there are 280 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Toronto.
- Yesterday's declaration of a State of Emergency was the first time this has been done in Toronto. It will ensure that the City can continue to respond quickly to this evolving situation.
- Those who are not social distancing are putting essential workers at risk: our healthcare workers, our first responders, the people who keep our water clean and safe, those who take care of our most vulnerable residents in long-term care homes and shelters, our transit workers, and all others whose work helps these people to do their jobs.
- They are also putting our most vulnerable residents at risk:
 - Our parents and our grandparents
 - People with compromised immune systems
 - People with chronic health conditions
- They are also putting our civil liberties in jeopardy. Our freedoms around the measures that we are taking right now, depend on people taking our public health advice seriously.
- I encourage you to think about this and think about your obligations to act collectively now.
- We are at a pivotal moment right here, and right now. To those who have followed our instructions to protect our most-vulnerable citizens and prevent further spread, by staying home, thank you, please continue this very responsible and this very caring action, to stay home.

- Every single person in our city plays a crucial role in preventing virus spread. Where we go from here and what happens next depends on you. To those of you who believe that your choice to ignore our public health recommendations will not make a difference – this is just not accurate, nor is it acceptable at this point. It is simply irresponsible.
- The consequences we face are city-wide, nation-wide, and global. You can impact which direction this goes, but it takes all of us to do the right thing at the right time and that time is now. What you must do is stay home.
- History will show that there were people who helped others through their behaviour, and others whose actions hurt our city's most vulnerable residents. Which side you will be on, is up to you. It is not too late. We can still collectively make a difference, but it has to be now.
- The time has come to put the greater good before oneself and think long and hard about whether you'd want to jeopardise the health of others, simply because it's "inconvenient" or "too difficult" to socially distance. To keep 6 feet apart from others.
- I've heard examples of excellent social, or physical, distancing:
 - Grocery stores and pharmacies using tape to help customers see and maintain a 6 foot distance at the checkout
 - Dropping off groceries or supplies on a doorstep
 - Not visiting anyone outside your household
- Thank you for acting responsibly at this difficult time. You are leading by example and modelling the way for others in our new world where keeping 6 feet away protects our loved ones, our friends and our city.
- I am asking everyone to stay home to protect yourself and others and prevent the spread of COVID-19. I ask this because we know that COVID19 is spread through close contact with others and we need to prevent this virus spread in our city.

- Staying home can still mean staying active. Try free live-streamed fitness classes, or apps to guide your in-home workout. If you must go outside to exercise, whether going for a walk or run, keep at least 6 feet space from others. Remember:
 - Having children over for a playdate is not social distancing
 - Playing soccer, or basketball with friends is not social distancing
 - Going out for a group walk or run is not social distancing
- We know that this virus spreads through close contact with another person's respiratory droplets when they are infected with COVID-19: their cough, their sneeze, or spending time and talking with someone closer than 6 feet in distance. If we keep 6 feet apart, even if someone may be contagious and not know it, then you significantly reduce your risk of infection.
- We all want to get back to our regular lives. We all want things to return to normal in our city. The best thing that you can do to support this is to stay home now.
- We will get through this. So please stay home, stay safe and take care of each other.

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Media contact: Lenore Bromley, Toronto Public Health, 416-338-7974,
Lenore.Bromley@toronto.ca