

Update on COVID-19

Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health

April 27, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.

Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- As of 11 a.m. today, there are 4,973 cases of COVID-19 in Toronto. This includes 4,493 confirmed cases and 480 probable ones. There are 308 people in hospital and 104 people in intensive care.
- Sadly, we continue to see COVID-19 deaths in our community. To date, 297 people have died of the virus in our city. Our thoughts are with everyone who has lost loved ones to COVID-19.
- We also recently learned of a teen diagnosed with COVID-19 who is being treated at the Hospital for Sick Children. The patient is currently in an isolation room and is stable. We wish a speedy recovery to all those who are recovering from this virus.
- While we continue with our COVID-19 response, we are seeing some promising signs that our public health efforts are working. I'm pleased to share that there have been 2,670 people who have now recovered from this virus in our city.
- Earlier today, Premier Ford announced a framework for reopening the province that outlines how the government is planning to reopen businesses, services and public spaces.
- As it relates to our city, in order for us to truly be effective in re-opening, we must continue with our public health measures until we are in a safe enough place to relax them. There are many factors we must consider in collaboration with the province and other key partners as we think about re-opening our city. Some of these consideration include:
 - A decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases over time;
 - Sufficient acute and critical healthcare capacity and availability of personal protective equipment;
 - Sufficient case and contact tracing capacity to contain community virus spread; and
 - The ability to rapidly identify new suspect COVID-19 cases outbreaks.

- As we move into week seven since I first asked you to practise physical distancing. I know that following these measures and being isolated is challenging, and more so as the weather gets nicer outside. I know that I am asking you to sacrifice a lot. But these measures protect those people that take care of us and our loved ones, and most importantly, these measures save lives.
- Over the weekend I heard stories of residents out and about on the Lakeshore trail and other locations on Saturday. I know it was a beautiful day and I would have loved to be outside enjoying our great city too. However, this day will come faster and we will be able to ease these restrictions sooner, if we continue to follow the public health advice that has helped us thus far.
- As I indicated last week, while we believe our rates of new infections are starting to level off, we are still in the middle of our local pandemic outbreak. People continue to get sick, some of them extremely so and many will die. The ongoing seriousness of our local situation is reflected by Minister of Education Stephen Lecce's announcement that all publicly-funded schools will remain closed until at least May 31.
- I know these are exceptionally difficult times we are living through. Many of us are working from home, balancing child care, managing stress from local business closures, experiencing financial loss, and trying to adjust to these unique challenges all at once. We are all trying our very best to cope with these adjustments that all outside of our control and affect our mental health.
- As a result, many of us are experiencing anxiety. Many of us are also worried about our future. While these feelings are uncomfortable, they are normal given our circumstances.
- In times of need, we often support each other in person with a visit, a hug and to demonstrate that we care. Unfortunately this is just not possible at this time. But there are some simple measures we can all follow to promote and preserve mental health and resilience. While these things are meant to be preventive measures, I think that they are also useful practices for managing through challenging times. So I thought I would share these five practices with you in the hopes that you may also find them helpful – over the next few weeks and beyond.

1: Connect with others – take the time every day to check in with family, friends, colleagues or neighbours. Call your elderly neighbour to see how they're doing. Skype, or Facetime, with your friends, or family. These are good ways to connect with others.

2: Be active – and this needn't be a big production. You can try free live-streamed fitness classes or apps to guide an in-home workout. If you go outside for a walk or run be sure to keep 6 feet distance when you are passing someone. Simple activities like taking the stairs if you live in an apartment building count too!

3: Keep learning – try to learn something new each day like trying a new recipe or reading a book that has been on your shelf for some time. This doesn't have to be complicated.

4: Be mindful – paying more attention to yourself in your everyday moments and taking time to reflect on how you are feeling.

5: Give back – consider picking up groceries or supplies for a friend or loved one, or donating to your local food bank.

- Please be kind to yourself and reach out for help, if you need support. And remember that even when things feel overwhelming, there is always hope. The City has partnered with many community organizations that are offering free support for residents. If you are feeling stressed or need emotional support related to COVID-19, I encourage you to visit our website and reach out to one of these organizations.
- In closing, I want to sincerely thank you for continuing to do your part by staying home, staying safe and taking care of each other. We are fortunate to live in a great city of people who are fundamentally caring, compassionate and resilient and are there for each other. Although we are physically apart, we are connected in spirit and we will get through these unprecedented times together.