

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
May 6, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory. In today's update there are 217 new COVID-19 infections in our city and sadly 35 new COVID-19 related deaths. In total, there have been 6,019 confirmed cases and 646 probable ones. There are currently 391 people in hospital and 99 in intensive care units. I continue to hear stories of the 504 friends, family members and other loved ones who we have lost to this virus in our city. There isn't a day that goes by where I don't reflect on these tragic losses. On behalf of my team, I extend my deepest sympathies to those who have lost loved ones, and wish a speedy recovery to those who are sick.
- Last week we started to see the number of new COVID-19 cases in Toronto slowly decrease. This is promising news and brings me hope. While you may think that washing your hands and practising physical distancing are small efforts on the global scale of the challenge we are facing, these measures are exactly what is needed to win this battle.
- It has been seven and a half weeks of physical distancing in our city and I know this continues to affect each of us in countless ways. We all want to move forward and get our lives back.
- At this time last year we were getting our gardens ready, bars and restaurants were preparing for a busy patio season, and we were enjoying time with our families and friends in our city's parks and other outdoor spaces. It was 23 degrees in the city and the sun was shining. Everyone was excited for summer.
- Fast forward to today, and our lives have changed significantly. We are certainly living and facing an unprecedented new "normal" as we live through a global pandemic.



Public Health

- The decreasing number of COVID-19 cases represents your commitment to our public health measures and to protecting your city, your friends and your family. It gives me hope because I know you are all taking care of each other and finding ways to cope in these extremely difficult and unique circumstances. This also demonstrates our ability as a city to come together and work through extreme challenges that none of us have ever faced before.
- While COVID-19 has drastically altered our lives and tragically we have lost too many of our friends, family members and other loved ones to this virus, thus far we have averted what could have been much worse. If you hadn't done your part, we could have been experiencing similar tragedies seen in other parts of the world. But we are not out of the woods yet and we need to remain diligent and focused.
- As I shared yesterday, now that the nice weather is upon us I know that we all need to spend time outside. Today, I am pleased to share some of our further plans to make more space available for walkers, joggers and cyclists. We are doing this so you can get outside and stay active, as we continue our efforts to fight COVID-19.
- The World Health Organization has urged wherever feasible to consider walking or biking when moving around during the COVID-19 outbreak. These modes of active transportation not only provide physical distancing, but can significantly reduce our risk of chronic diseases and improve our mental health.
- We know that COVID-19 spreads through contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus. These droplets can spread up to 2 metres, or 6 feet and we know that close prolonged contact creates the highest risk for infection.
- So what does this mean? This means that the risk for becoming infected with COVID-19 while passing someone on the street, walking trail or bike path is low. So when you are running or walking outside, please step aside or pass others quickly and courteously.



Public Health

- We know that mobility is key to recovery. This is why, as our recovery process begins, we need to keep Toronto moving. As you've just heard in Mayor Tory's update, we at Toronto Public Health are working with our colleagues in the City's Transportation Services division on a plan to provide more space for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders so we can move around safely in our city.
- We know that how we live and move in our city impacts our health each and every day. Active transportation is more significant than ever as a result of COVID-19. This is why I look forward to leading this important work with my city colleagues and making progress as quickly as possible.
- In closing, I know that we are all anxiously awaiting the day when we get our city back. Your personal sacrifices have started to result in positive milestones. We need to be careful not to undo our progress. It is the job of public health to balance measures meant to control the spread of COVID-19 with the health, social and economic consequences of those measures, with the overall goal of protecting the health of our city. I know we can continue to work together to win this battle.
- So please do continue to stay safe, please continue to practise physical distancing when you go outside, and please continue to take care of each other.

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