

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
May 12, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory. Today there are 218 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. To date, 5,449 people have recovered, an increase of 109 since yesterday. More detailed data on the status of COVID-19 cases in our city is available on our website.
- I continue to receive many questions about the health risk of acquiring COVID-19 when an employee at a grocery store or other similar setting has the virus. Because there is community spread of COVID-19, not all infections among store employees were acquired from their workplace.
- This virus continues to spread in many different locations in our city, but the highest risk is from close household contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19. This is why it is important for everyone to keep six feet away from others when they are outside and to wash your hands often.
- For local grocery stores, pharmacies and other businesses, I continue to recommend routine infection prevention and control practices. This includes regular cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- I think it's important to remind everyone that easing our public health measures will continue to be a gradual process until we have a vaccine, or effective treatments for this virus. Until that time, physical distancing will be part of our everyday lives – in all settings.
- I also continue to recommend for everyone to stay within your household bubble, as it has come to be known, in order to reduce the likelihood of disease spread throughout our community. This has been the advice for several weeks and continues to be the best course of action in our city for now.

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- While the overall rate of infection is going down in our province, which is good news, we need to be mindful that we still face the ongoing risk of COVID-19. So, what does all this mean for our "next normal"? What might life look like until then?
- As we heard earlier this afternoon, the Province will be announcing details of phase one of its reopening plan on Thursday. As the province relaxes public health measures, we can expect to slowly return to enjoying some of the activities that we have missed in recent months. However, we will need to continue to avoid crowds and, unfortunately, large gatherings for the foreseeable future.
- With the prospect of reopening it becomes that much more important for everyone to continue practising physical distancing. As I shared last week, in situations where you are in close contact with others and physical distancing is difficult to maintain, I recommend for people to wear a cloth mask, or face covering to prevent the spread of your germs to others, even if you are not experiencing symptoms.
- This pandemic has brought us profound changes for which we had no time to prepare. A recent survey suggests that nearly two thirds of Ontarians indicate that leaving their home gives rise to anxiety.
- Further, the pandemic restricts our ability to reach out to connect in person to comfort our friends, families and loved ones to help us to cope and manage through these difficult times.
- Unfortunately I do not have specific timelines on when our local situation will change, but I know that it will depend on our collective actions and our ability to maintain good physical distancing and public health practices like frequent handwashing. Based on your commitment, I am hopeful that we will continue to move in the right direction.
- I want to sincerely thank you once again for continuing to do your part. We are truly fortunate to live in a great city of caring, compassionate and resilient people who are there for each other. Although we are physically apart, we are connected in spirit and we will get through this pandemic together.

- In the meantime, I ask you to continue to rely on and support each other. So please text, call, or connect virtually with your friends, families and loved ones to check in on them. Please also continue to practise physical distancing when you go outside, and please continue to take care of each other.

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