

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
May 15, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory and good afternoon. Today there are 160 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. To date, 6,034 people have recovered, an increase of 183 since yesterday. More detailed data on the status of COVID-19 cases in our city is available on our website.
- As I shared yesterday, we must continue careful data monitoring as we move towards recovery. Our data will tell us if our local situation is changing and make sure we are ready to act as needed.
- Mayor Tory stated in his remarks, until we reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our city it is not the time for large gatherings. As we move to COVID-19 recovery, we need to look at our specific local circumstances as we follow the Provincial recovery framework. This includes:
 - Making sure we continue to reduce the number of new cases of COVID-19 infection;
 - That there is have capacity in our hospitals to manage surges in COVID-19 cases while still providing all the other medical care that people need;
 - That we have enough public health resources and capacity to manage an increase in COVID-19 cases; and
 - That there is enough testing and surveillance capacity in the provincial system to quickly detect new cases and virus spread in our community.
- As Mayor Tory also shared in his remarks, all planned summer camps and summer recreation programs have been cancelled. We know how important these camps are to the health of our children and their families, and I know how they are a fun part of summer. This is why my team is working with the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation division to provide guidance on how they can provide a modified version of summer day camps this year that are safe for our youth – if provincial restrictions are lifted and our local conditions allow.

- On another topic, as you may know, the province leads all COVID-19 testing in Ontario. Yesterday, they announced that anyone in the province who has one or more symptoms of COVID-19 can now get tested at a local assessment centre.
 - While more testing will result in an increase in local case numbers, this will give us a better picture of our local situation.
 - As always we identify close contacts of people who test positive for COVID-19 and quickly move them into self-isolation before they develop symptoms to reduce virus spread. This is critical as we move forward from COVID-19 response to COVID-19 recovery.
- Globally we are also learning more about the symptoms of COVID-19. While the initial focus for diagnosis of COVID-19 was on symptoms like fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, we now know that COVID-19 can present with a headache, sore throat, runny nose that does not fit with your typical seasonal allergies, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain. If you or a family member are experiencing one or more of these symptoms, you can be tested for COVID-19 at a local assessment centre. For a list of Toronto locations, please visit our website.
- I know this pandemic is affecting all of us and it is weighing on our mental health. We all have hard days and are trying our very best to manage our current circumstances. I want to take a moment to ask everyone to find some positives in these extremely difficult times.
- As I have shared before, I find going out for a walk and listening to music a great way to decompress and insert a positive moment into my day. There is a growing body of evidence that music and other arts have a powerful impact on our mental and emotional wellbeing. Think of the times you have felt soothed by a melody, or found comfort in the lyrics of a song. Music can make us happier, lower our stress levels and help us sleep.
- In many ways, music and other creative arts are a glue that holds us together. It is a common shared thread through good times and in bad. As we all seek comfort and hope, many of us find these in the power of music and art.

- I continue to admire and be inspired by the creativity in our city. I would like to end this week with some positive examples that stood out for me and I hope will inspire you too. I have heard of:
 - Musicians recording background vocals for their upcoming new albums at home while juggling childcare and other responsibilities. Others are offering online music tutorials for some of their popular songs.
 - The Art Gallery of Ontario has made their collections and exhibits available virtually. Other art organizations are offering virtual art and creative writing activities.
 - There is even a social media challenge asking people to share the 10 albums that had the most impact on their lives. The popularity of this challenge further demonstrates the power of music.
- To everyone who is finding new and creative ways to share hope and joy – thank you. Your efforts to create and share your art with us at this challenging time is making a difference. Your leadership is inspiring and your talents are helping many of us to keep our spirits up.
- In closing, I ask everyone to be kind to yourselves, and continue to be kind to each other. Reach out and check in on your loved ones. If you or somebody you know is feeling overwhelmed, remember that there are many services available for you by phone and online, posted on our website.
- And finally, as you enjoy the long weekend, continue to practise physical distancing and continue taking care of each other.

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