

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**May 29, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.**  
**Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you Mayor Tory and good afternoon. Today there are 175 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. To date, 8,086 people have recovered, an increase of 142 since yesterday. For more detailed data on the status of COVID-19 cases in our city, please visit our website.
- COVID-19 has changed how we live and how we work. It has now been over two months since we asked businesses and other employers to help staff work from home where possible. Given the close proximity of people in many workplaces and during their daily commute, this was a critical step to reduce the spread of COVID-19. It has also helped us keep essential front-line workers safe.
- I would like to echo Mayor Tory's message of thanks to all employers who have committed to continue their “work from home” programs for employees. I also sincerely thank everyone who has made the necessary adjustments to work from home. I know it has been challenging for many people – but your collective efforts are helping to protect the health of our city.
- COVID-19 has launched many of us into suddenly working from home. This has been a new experience for many of us, especially for a prolonged period of time, and with an added layer of complexity for those who are also managing childcare and virtual online learning. Others may be sharing space with their partner, family members, or roommates who are also now working from home, sometimes in small spaces. These are certainly very different routines.
- While there can be many benefits to working from home, such as more time with family and no commute, it is still an adjustment, and a change in our routine. To mark the end of the work week, I checked our city's occupational health and safety tips for teleworking and thought that now would be a good time to offer some tips for staying healthy while working from home.

- First, create a consistent routine and keep a structured work schedule to help keep you focused. Occupational health experts recommend:
  - Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule to make sure that you are getting enough rest. They suggest aiming for 8 hours and trying to get up at the same time each day.
  - Sharing childcare duties if you have small children and are able to share, and consider splitting the day with your partner.
  - Having a regular morning routine, including getting dressed for your day, as you were going to the office.
  - Taking a break and get up to stretch and move around every couple of hours. Go outside for fresh air and sunlight. Consider setting a timer if this is helpful to you.
  - Eating well and drinking lots of water. Making sure you have healthy snacks and trying to eat your lunch away from your computer.
  - Maintaining or starting an exercise routine and get active. Increasing opportunities for daily physical activity have positive impacts on our physical and mental health.
- Secondly, while many of us may not have an existing workstation at home, it is important and advised to create a designated work area in your home that is free of clutter and minimizes distractions. Our occupational health experts suggest that you should:
  - Avoid working from your couch and sitting in awkward posture.
  - To maintain good posture, use a chair with good support or use a rolled towel or a cushion for back support. It is also important to ensure that the top of your computer screen is at eye level.
- Finally, it is important to incorporate movement into your day, rather than staying seated all day. Stretch intermittently throughout the day and consider setting a timer to remind you to get up and move. Stand up while speaking on the phone. Try to get out of the house and go for a walk at lunchtime or another time during the day.

- I hope everyone who is working from home will find some useful tips out of this advice I have just provided. For businesses that can operate with employees at home, this will be the new normal for a while, so it is important to make sure we are setting ourselves up for success.
  
- As we gradually move towards reopening our city, it is critical that we all continue to do our part to drive down the rate of new infections. To do this a number of public health measures will remain in place for the foreseeable future, and your individual contributions continue to be central to our success. So please continue to:
  - Wash your hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Keep 6 feet or 2 metres distance from others.
  - If you take transit or are shopping in person, do your best to keep physical distance from others and wear a cloth mask or face covering if that distance cannot be reliably maintained.
  - Continue to work from home if you are able. However, if your job requires you to be onsite, be extra vigilant about hand hygiene and physical distancing.
  
- Please remember that all your efforts are worth it. You are saving lives. Every action you take brings us one step closer to getting our city back.
  
- The forecast looks promising this weekend. Please go outside to enjoy some sunshine, fresh air and exercise. Whether you walk, jog or cycle, I encourage everyone to take advantage of the ActiveTO spaces our city has created for you to safely enjoy. So please remember to practice physical distancing, and stay within your household bubble when you go outside, and please continue to take care of each other.