

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
May 25, 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 177 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. To date, 7,509 people have recovered, an increase of 112 since yesterday. For more detailed information on COVID-19 in our city, please visit our website.
- I understand that there are questions regarding people who were present at Trinity Bellwoods Park on Saturday and what advice I have for these individuals. If you were one of these people, it is possible that you may have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 infection, but with little or no symptoms, especially if you were within six feet of others having face-to-face conversations. Because of this it is important that you monitor yourself carefully for COVID-19 symptoms for the next 14 days. If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, please go and get tested immediately.
- While you are self-monitoring for symptoms for the next 14 days, I would ask that you are extra diligent with hand hygiene. In addition, please make sure you keep a physical distance of six feet from others and, if you are not able to do so, please make sure you wear a non-medical mask to prevent the spread of any germs that you may have to others. Please also consider avoiding contact with people who are most vulnerable for serious illness, or complications of COVID-19 such as elderly people and those with chronic health conditions. I had the opportunity to discuss this matter with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health this afternoon and we all agree on this approach.
- On another note, I have also recently learned that our data suggests that it is taking on average almost 5 days from the time someone presents with COVID-19 symptom to when they get tested. This is very concerning. COVID-19 symptoms can include: fever, cough, difficulty breathing, unexplained fatigue, 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, please go and get tested. You need to isolate until you get tested. If you live with other people, please inform them that you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and getting tested. People you live with should also monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested if they develop any of these symptoms.
- Even if you are not worried about becoming sick yourself, we all need to remember that our actions have an impact on other people in our community. You may feel healthy and have no symptoms, but you can still have COVID-19 and be contagious. While you are out with your friends you can unknowingly spread the virus. It can then spread further, possibly to a more vulnerable person who is at risk of serious complications from COVID-19 or at risk of dying. This could be anybody – your friends, your neighbours, your parents, your loved ones.
- I believe each and every one of us wants to do the right thing and keep each other safe. So, while it may be difficult, especially as we head into summer, we must continue to practise physical distancing. This is the only way we can get to a time when we can all safely connect with our friends and family in person.
- On another topic, I wanted to take a moment to address the hot weather currently forecasted for our city. Please remember that hot weather can be dangerous to your health. Impacts range from mild symptoms like heat rash, through to more serious ones like heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Heat-related illness is preventable and there are actions you can take to stay safe and keep cool. Make sure you stay inside during the hottest part of the day and keep hydrated. I encourage everyone to call to check in with vulnerable friends, relatives and neighbours, especially elderly residents living alone, to ensure they are staying hydrated and keeping cool. You can learn more and get tips to beat the heat at toronto.ca/keepcool.
- I do encourage residents to get active outside and enjoy the nice weather and some fresh air. We know that physical activity is important for our overall health and well-being.

Public Health

- This is why I'm so pleased to see more space being created through ActiveTO so our residents can get outside to exercise in a way that is safe. Increasing opportunities for daily physical activity has a positive impact on our physical and our mental health, and can significantly reduce our risk of a number of chronic diseases, and some cancers.
- Active transportation is more significant than ever as a result of COVID-19 and whether you walk, jog or cycle, I encourage everyone to take advantage of these opportunities while the weather is nice. Please keep hydrated by drinking lots of water when you go outside, even before you feel thirsty. Just a reminder, at this time you should only be going outside with members of your household.
- Expanding our cycling network through ActiveTO will help protect and promote good health in our city, not only now but for years to come. I look forward to implementing these important initiatives to keep people healthy and mobile, now and in the future.
- While we know that the risk for becoming infected with COVID-19 while passing someone on the street, or walking trail or bike path is low, I would ask that you give each other space. Please step aside or pass others quickly when you are out and about, so that we can all create more space for all of us to be active.
- I want to stress again that to move forward, we need you to continue to do your part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please continue to practise physical distancing at all times, and take care of each other.