

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
June 30, 2020 at 9 a.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory and good morning everyone. To date, my team Toronto Public Health has investigated over 14,000 cases of COVID-19 in our city. While our new local cases are currently declining, and we have entered Stage 2 of the re-opening process, the risk of ongoing spread of COVID-19 continues.
- While the science on masks is still evolving, there is a growing body of emerging evidence that shows that non-medical masks can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, more so if taken along with our other public health advice to wash your hands often, maintain physical distance, stay home if you are sick and get tested if you have symptoms of the virus. For this reason, I am presenting a report today to Toronto City Council to require the use of masks or face coverings in all indoor public spaces.
- We know that some jurisdictions around the world, including many in the United States, are experiencing a resurgence of cases since re-opening. As we approach our re-opening, let us not forget that our progress certainly took a great deal of work and sacrifice. COVID-19 is unlike any infectious disease we've faced in our lifetime.
- Over the past months we have learned a lot about COVID-19. We know that this virus spreads primarily through contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus -- their cough, their sneeze, or by talking in close prolonged contact. We have also learned that COVID-19 can be transmitted by people who are infected with the virus but not yet showing symptoms or only showing very mild symptoms.
- And we have learned that cloth masks can help to protect others from our germs. Remember, I wear my cloth mask to protect you and you wear one to protect me. This is why, in order to be most effective, we need as many

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people as possible wearing cloth masks or face coverings to reduce virus spread. And we have also learned that this is particularly the case in indoor settings where the risk of virus spread is higher.

- We have also observed that places that have required mask use have more people complying with the wearing of masks. So this is why I am asking for City Council to enact a temporary bylaw today asking business owners and operators to adopt a policy to help ensure that masks or face coverings are worn by their customers in public spaces under their control. I am asking that everyone who is able to wear a cloth mask wears one. This does not include people who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons, or children under two years old.
- Lastly, I am also asking City Council to recommend that the Province and the Government of Canada enact a complementary mask regulation applicable to enclosed public spaces in our city that are under provincial or federal jurisdiction. I am asking for these actions so that all enclosed spaces in Toronto will be protected so we can keep taking care of each other and keep reducing virus spread in our city.
- I think it's also very important for us to remember that while our COVID-19 case numbers have decreased, this does not mean there is no risk of contracting the virus in our city. The reality is that the virus continues to circulate in our city and we still need to be careful. This point is made very clear in the experiences of other jurisdictions. Even in those place that did not have as many cases of COVID-19 as we have had, they are now seeing more cases and clusters now that they have reopened.
- I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for all of us to remember that we are still in the middle of a pandemic. While we have made great progress together, we cannot take this progress for granted. Now that our city has entered stage 2, we need to move forward with caution and care. I do not take our progress lightly and I want us to keep moving forward together.



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- Since the beginning of this pandemic I have asked you to take care of each other. Today I am making this recommendation and asking for you to do this once again. This is why I am asking City Council to enact this temporary bylaw today so more people will wear masks or face coverings in all enclosed public settings and help to reduce virus spread in our city. I will now turn it over to Councillor Cressy for his remarks.

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