

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
June 17, 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 86 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. To date, 11,397 people have recovered, an increase of 202 since yesterday. For more detailed data on the status of COVID-19 cases in our city, I encourage you to visit our website.
 - I wanted to remind you that our COVID-19 monitoring dashboard which tracks our progress is also available online. As mentioned, the dashboard helps us assess how we are doing in terms of achieving our COVID-19 response objectives: to prevent loss of life, preserve the capacity of our health system and minimize social, economic and broader health impacts. Today's updated dashboard continues to show that while our status remains yellow, we continue to move in the right direction. Of particular note, our new case counts and new hospitalizations are decreasing each day.
 - The steady decrease in new COVID-19 cases is a result of your continued efforts. Together we have made a lot of progress through your commitment to our public health measures. These protective measures and restrictions have saved lives, but we also know that the public health benefit has come at some expense, including the economic, social and personal well-being of many of our residents.
 - This is why as mentioned on Monday, equally important as our numbers, is our progress against our COVID-19 objectives to assess our readiness to safely reopen. Taken all together, our progress will be assessed on when the timing is right for us to safely reopen. And, as we move further into the recovery phase and get ready to proceed to stage 2 of reopening, it is critical that we provide support to our local businesses and community to help them to be ready.

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- As I shared with you late last week, my team has been preparing guidance documents to support the safe reopening for our local businesses and community organizations. All businesses and organizations need to adjust how they operate to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Whether you are a business owner or operator, an employee, or a customer, it is important to stay informed to understand what our new normal will look like in the months ahead.
- There is a range of guidance documents we have made available online, each developed to address the unique circumstance of different types of workplaces and community settings in our city: from businesses, to not-for-profit services, farmers' markets and many other settings. My team continues to expand these online resources and I encourage you to take the time to read them.
- My team and I continue to receive questions about the series of steps that restaurants, personal service settings and places of worship need to take to safely reopen as we transition to our new normal living with COVID-19. So today, I will provide some highlights from these guidance documents as I understand that these areas are of particular interest.
- Our city has some of the best restaurants in the world. While we have been fortunate over the last few months to support our local businesses and access great restaurant food on a take-out and delivery basis, I know we are all looking forward to enjoying a summer patio in local restaurants in person. To make this safe for customers and staff, all restaurant operators will need to make specific adjustments.
- When the province allows us to move to stage 2, restaurant operators will be permitted to provide dine in service only on patios. Patios must be open to the air with umbrellas permitted for sun shade. Other required measures for restaurant operators include:
 - Maintaining physical distancing;
 - Ensuring staff and customers use cloth masks when it is not possible to maintain physical distance; and
 - Screening staff and customers for COVID-19 symptoms, to name just a few.

- Another important area that my team continues to receive questions on is for personal service settings, which include hairstyling and barbering, nail salons, and other aesthetic services. Guidance to keep clients and staff safe when delivering these services include:
 - Regular cleaning and disinfecting before opening, after each client and throughout the day;
 - Ensuring physical distancing of 2 metres or six feet and reducing the number of people onsite;
 - Screening staff and clients for symptoms of COVID-19;
 - Ensuring customers are wearing cloth face masks when receiving services; and
 - Training staff to ensure they understand the new cleaning protocols, when and how to use their personal protective equipment, and how to respond to questions.
- The last guidance document I would like to highlight today is for faith-based organizations. While the province has already allowed faith-based organizations to hold in-person gatherings under certain conditions, faith community leaders are strongly encouraged to carefully consider how and when to re-establish in-person activities. This is because we know that religious gatherings tend to occur in indoor settings and are generally attended by older populations who are more likely to experience severe impacts from COVID-19. With this in mind, advice for faith based organizations includes the following:
 - Restricting attendants to no more than 30% of the capacity of the premises;
 - Maintaining a distance of two metres between all people as much as possible;
 - Encouraging the use of cloth masks, and requiring that cloth masks are worn in those rare circumstances where physical distancing is not possible;
 - Enhancing cleaning and disinfection, especially for high touch surfaces;
 - Limiting singing as it is believed to increase virus transmission; and
 - Deferring or postponing rituals that may contribute to virus spread.
- As we get ready to enter stage 2, we must ensure that the public, businesses and community groups are all using appropriate precautions to safely reopen.



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- For all business and organization settings, when the Province gives us the greenlight to proceed to stage 2, I encourage you to reopen only when you are confident you can do so safely. Please visit our website and look under the community and workplace settings page to review the relevant guidance documents.
- Following this advice will help all of us get back to enjoying our city safely, while we live with COVID-19 in our community. We all need to continue doing our part to keep moving forward and reduce virus spread.
- So please, continue to practise physical distancing, and where you can't consistently maintain that distance, please use a cloth mask. This is how you can help protect each other and do your part to reduce virus spread.

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