

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
July 27, 2020 at 2 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory and good afternoon. Over the past two days, in total, there were 58 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. Today, we are reporting only 5 new infections in our city. This is our lowest number of new infections that we have reported in quite some time. To date, 13,772 people have recovered, an increase of 104 over the weekend.
- While I'm pleased that our local COVID-19 cases continue to decrease, new infections continue to be reported each day in our city. We know that approximately 25% of these cases are a result of community transmission. I am also concerned by what we are observing in other Canadian cities and locations globally as they reopen. We cannot take this lightly. We must not let our guard down.
- I have heard many people speak of COVID fatigue and I hear that some believe that the pandemic is over. I have also heard that many people may believe that because they have not caught the virus over the past six months, they feel confident that they won't get sick.
- I am concerned as I continue to hear that some younger people believe that they are not at risk of catching COVID-19, and they will not experience severe illness if they get infected. While it is true that younger people who catch COVID-19 may have a lower risk of more severe outcomes, this does not mean that there is no risk.
- The reality is that there are people in their 20s and 30s who have become very unwell with COVID-19 infections. There are people in their 20s and 30s who are generally healthy who have gotten very sick from this virus and some who have needed ICU admission and ventilator support. Once admitted to the ICU we know that the road to recovery can be a very long one. The bottom line is younger people are not immune to COVID-19.

- We must also consider those around us who may be at risk for a severe outcome. This could be our family members, neighbours, colleagues or friends. This is why I continue to ask you to please think of others and to take care of each other.
- And finally, we don't want to lose the progress that we have made. There are many jurisdictions that have had to go back and I don't want this to happen in our city.
- I know that this journey has been tough for all of us, myself included. However, the reality is COVID-19 is still here and we need everyone to stay focused on stopping its spread. We need to keep physical distancing from others who are not in our COVID-19 social circle to prevent this virus from spreading. So I want to be clear:
 - Having friends over for dinner or coffee who are outside of your social bubble, or social circle of 10, is not physical distancing.
 - Arranging playdates for your kids with others who are outside your social bubble is also not physical distancing.
 - Having a gathering or hosting a house party with people outside your COVID-19 bubble is not physical distancing.
- Every time you meet others who are outside of your social bubble, and especially if you do not maintain physical distance, you are exposing yourself and potentially others to a new risk.
- We need to stay focused and we need to stay ahead of this virus so we can keep moving forward.
- As you know, we have made great strides over the past several weeks to reduce virus spread in our city. This progress is from your hard work in following public health measures. And while it is not possible to predict when a second wave might occur, my team is actively preparing for a potential surge in COVID-19 activity by implementing a variety of public health measures.

- Further to this, as Premier Ford stated on Friday, the decision regarding when our city will move Stage 3 of reopening is delayed until Wednesday. My team and I have taken this extra time to plan based on our unique circumstances and observations from other jurisdictions. This is why last week we asked that a number of additional measures and enhancements for the Stage 3 reopening orders be considered for Toronto.
- My team has also recommended the provision of a safe isolation space for people with COVID-19 or those who are at risk of infection and cannot properly isolate at home.
- Anyone infected with COVID-19 is required to isolate in order to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in our community. Unfortunately not everyone in our community is able to effectively isolate in their current living situation.
- An isolation site would help people who live in housing that may be crowded or have insufficient space to effectively and safely isolate. An isolation site would reduce the risk of spreading the virus to household contacts which is known to be one of the most common ways that the virus is spread in the community. This measure was supported by our Board of Health at their meeting earlier this month. Since this time, my team and I have been in active discussions with provincial and federal partners on establishing such a site.
- All of these recommendations are important investments in our community's economy and our shared future. Above all, I believe they are necessary to keep our residents safe as we move forward living with COVID-19.
- The recent increase in reported cases of COVID-19 in other jurisdictions that have reopened before us is a stark reminder of the potential for this virus to spread if it is given the chance to do so. As we continue our journey towards reopening our city, we must be prepared for a surge in virus activity.
- I know that we all want to get back to life before COVID-19. But, we need to keep moving forward with caution and care to protect the health of those around us. We must do this until we have an effective treatment or vaccine against COVID-19. Each of us plays an important role in reducing the risk for



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others around us. So please wash your hands, watch your distance to others, wear your mask and please, continue to take care of each other.

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