

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
November 18, 2020 at 2 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you, Mayor Tory, and good afternoon. Today I am reporting 445 new COVID-19 cases. 191 people in Toronto are in hospital with COVID-19 and 44 people are in intensive care units.
- When I spoke to you on Monday, there were 176 people in hospital and 42 of them in ICU.
- On 15 of the 18 days so far this month, at least 10 people have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19.
- On 15 of the 18 days so far this month, the number of people in hospital with COVID-19 has been above 150.
- The hospitalization rates suggest COVID-19 is slowly and steadily manifesting again as an illness that is putting people in hospital.
- There is no guarantee that slow and steady will not shift to rapidly overwhelming.
- The latest percent positivity figure for Toronto is now 6.2%. A week ago it was 5.9%.
- The most recent percent positivity figures are noticeably higher for two age categories:
 - For teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17, the percent positivity rate is 7.5%.
 - For young people between the ages of 18 and 23, it's 8.2%.

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- For parents, this is something to think about seriously. As a parent to teenagers, I know that as younger people become more independent, it doesn't always appear that they're taking our advice seriously, but I know firsthand that our advice is seldom ignored entirely.
- I know that in these circumstances, as parents, we will all want to have said and done everything we could have to help keep our children safe.
- I urge you not to find yourself wishing you'd said something when you had the chance.
- Yesterday, we saw 559 new COVID-19 cases. That's one of five days this month with 500 or more confirmed cases. Those five days have all occurred since November 9th.
- There are currently 27 outbreaks in long-term care settings, 7 in retirement homes and 13 in hospital settings.
- I am sad to report that we are also reporting 22 deaths today with 21 linked to outbreaks. This means that all but one of those deaths occurred in a setting where vulnerability to the worst outcomes from COVID-19 runs high.
- We're close to 1,100 deaths in long-term care and retirement homes since the pandemic began. We have seen a total of 1,490 deaths in our city thus far.
- On behalf of my team, I extend my deepest sympathies to those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19, and send our well wishes to those who are sick and recovering from this illness.
- While infection prevention and control measures in these settings have improved greatly, we must always remember the vulnerability of the people who live in them, given their age and frequent underlying conditions.

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- COVID-19 is still finding a way into these settings. This reinforces the pressing need for us to limit our exposure to people we don't live with – because before COVID-19 starts spreading in any setting, someone, somehow, brought it in, possibly without even knowing it. This is the risk of socializing, especially with guards down and masks off.
- In times like this, it's natural to want to enjoy the company of our friends, our colleagues and our families and to forget about all of this, even if just for a little while.
- The need to feel normal is powerful.
- But ironically, that need may well be playing the biggest part in sustaining the circumstances we're trying to forget about.
- We may, as individuals, be willing to take on the risk of COVID-19. It is worth remembering, though, that we don't take on the risk alone.
- Someone's mild illness could be someone else's fatal illness.
- Whichever public health measures we can put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19, the most effective limits are the ones we set for ourselves.
- So I ask you again to think about your limits and what that can mean for you and the people around you in the weeks ahead.